



DOCTORIAL THESIS CERTEC, LTH NUMMER 1:2006

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FACE

Disabled People, Technology and Internet



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Acknowledgements

If I had dared, this section would have been entitled “Musical Intro” because nowhere else have I commented on all the music that helped me finish this thesis. However, I will stay with the more conventional “Acknowledgements”. But had I gone with the first choice, I would have played “The Long And Winding Road”, “Eight Days A Week”, “I’ve Just Seen A Face” and perhaps “Not A Second Time” to get people in the right mood for this thesis.

And then, I would have dedicated “With A Little Help From My Friends” to all my colleagues at Certec, colleagues at the Independent Living Institute, colleagues at the Swedish Knowledge Foundation’s national virtual research school, LearnIt, and all the people on Tenerife and in Sweden who have given me such invaluable support and insights during this work.

To my supervisor and very good friend, Professor Bodil Jönsson, I would have requested “Carry That Weight”, “You Know What To Do” and “Don’t Ever Change”.

To my assistant supervisor, Professor Berth Danermark, I would have played “Tell Me What You See” and “Fixing A Hole”.

To Miles Goldstick and Eileen Deaner who have helped me with my unanswered love to the English language, I would have played “The Word” and “Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da”. To Kate Hellqvist for capturing my thoughts and putting colour to them, “Thank You Girl”.

To my beloved wife I would have crooned “I Want You” and to my children “All My Loving” and then together with my lovely big family I would have bellowed “Strawberry Fields Forever”.

I would have finished with “Tomorrow Never Knows” and that would have been it!

*Peter Anderberg
Lund, August 2006*

Summary

This thesis is based on the Internet experiences of people with significant mobility/physical impairments who are proficient and experienced computer users in their computer world but have limitations in mobility that severely restrict their functioning in the physical world. The Internet *functioning* of this group is analysed by means of the factors *attitude*, *control* and *enabling*, with the main focus on what is achievable when all access problems such as unadapted interfaces, beginners' difficulties and the digital divide are overcome. If the virtual world is fully available but the real world is not – what are the effects on learning, self image, communities of practice, sense of coherence, power and control? What are the effects on peer-to-peer learning and co-operation? Independent living concepts and theories manifest themselves throughout the thesis, most obviously, perhaps, in the selection of issues that are studied and in the perspectives.

The theoretical background and concepts are those of disability studies, with a social model and independent living perspective, and with strong influences from rehabilitation engineering and design.

Throughout the thesis elaborations and clarifications of the possibilities of interplay and co-existence between rehabilitation engineering and design and disability studies are made. Different aspects of function design and technology are examined from an expanded view on functioning, where technology is put in an individual and social context with the **FACE** (**F**unction – **A**ttitude, **C**ontrol, **E**nabling) tool.

KEY WORDS

Rehabilitation Engineering, Functioning, Internet, Social Model, Disability Studies, Independent Living, Design, FACE

Purpose

Based on the personal actions and descriptions of people with mobility/physical disabilities, the purpose of the research presented in this thesis is to identify, describe and analyse functional opportunities on the Internet for accustomed users with considerable physical impairments. In addition, the goal is to illustrate, discuss and develop the interactive potential that exists between the field of rehabilitation engineering and design and that of disability studies.

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Introduction

The research presented in this thesis emerges from the situation for people with significant mobility/physical disabilities vis-à-vis the Internet at the beginning of the 21st century. It deals with function and power, technology, relationships and the potential for personal development.

My Own Background

My ability to function physically has gradually diminished over the last 25 years as the result of a muscle disease. I have used wheelchairs for the last fifteen years, both electric and manual, and have personal assistance a good part of the day and night to help me with activities of daily living. I graduated from university with a Master's of Engineering in 1997 and was awarded a Licentiate in Engineering in 1999.

"Disability is not a 'brave struggle' or 'courage in the face of adversity'... disability is an art. It's an ingenious way to live."
Neil Marcus

ANDREAS, LINUS & I

Andreas is seven years old and Linus is five. They love to play hide and seek with me. It starts with them running far away and with me counting slowly to 10 before I go and look for them. They usually take the path down to the brook, over the bridge and towards the waterfalls, so I have a good idea of where I should start looking. When they are hiding, they keep an eye on me so they know where I am heading. Of late, they have learnt to take the path that goes up the hill and towards the long wall, the one that resembles the Great Wall of China, and that runs from the valley floor to the top of the mountain. It is harder to find them there, but they usually give me a clue to get me on the right track. As I approach, they always sneak away and I have to chase after them to their great amusement. They love it when we race over the fields and into the woods.

When I have almost caught up to them, they usually take a leap and jump straight up in the air. When they learnt to fly like this, they realized that it was another dimension they could utilize to get away from me. The feeling of speed is glorious as we glide low over the great wall. I love to fly there with Andreas and Linus in my lap, holding on to them and cuddling them as we fall headlong towards the wall at full speed.

Sometimes I take them with me to town and we look at all the strange things and houses that are there. They ask about every-

thing in the way that children do, and I explain as best I can all that we encounter. Sometimes we hike in Yellowstone or in a world full of snow, or run around among the ruins of ancient Greece. We have even visited Mars a number of times as well as examined the spaceship.

In other words, Andreas and Linus usually sit on my lap in the wheelchair when we explore and play in all the different environments that can be found in the 3D virtual reality universe of *Active Worlds*. I have my computer on the desk right in front of me and Andreas has his on the left, while Linus has his on the right. We sit together in the physical world and play together in the virtual one. Just me and my kids. My wife isn't there, no personal assistants, no one else but a father and his kids, running around and having fun.

I spend a lot of time with my children. We draw, build with Lego bricks, read books and lots of other things. But in many of the games and activities, I take on the role of a passive spectator. That I can play with my children in the way I have just described is because for a long time I have been using computers as well as Internet and virtual environments to compensate and eliminate the functional limitations that arise in a variety of situations.

BEING AN ENGINEER

I am an engineer and technician and have, in some sense, always been that. As long as I can remember, I have taken things apart to see how they worked and sometimes, though not as often, even succeeded in putting them back together again. As a seven year old, my paternal grandfather shared his interest in electronics with me by allowing me to unscrew and play with radios, tape recorders, transformers and such gadgets that today I would consider highly dangerous for my own children to play with. In those days, apparently, children were not as fragile.

My grandfather mentioned sometime later on that there were two types of engineers: those who liked to take apart things that already existed and those who liked to build new gadgets that worked. The best, according to grandpa, were those who had a little of both in them. I took this as a sort of reprimand because I was mostly interested in taking things apart, seeing how they worked and what they looked like inside, removing or altering something, and then screwing them back together to see if the results were something different and if they still worked. If they did not, that was just as interesting, because that meant you had found something that was important. I was quite interested in how things appeared on the surface. When I built my first electric guitar, it was not so that I could play it – I knew it would never really work – but because it was so cool and because it was

beautiful. My boat was not primarily for sailing, but to alter or rebuild and because it looked so good. Functionality, to the degree it was achieved, was often a pleasant and unexpected bonus.

This kind of information may appear to be a bit odd in a thesis focused on function and functioning, but I have included it because I believe it has significance in a least two areas. Firstly, it is a characteristic that has been a part of me all my life. I love technology and electronics and I am not satisfied just knowing that it works; I really want to know how and why. I think that the appearance of objects matters enormously, and that artefacts talk strongly to me by virtue of their appearance and their context. I have carried this with me into the areas where I have explored the interaction between technology and disabled people as a central characteristic in technology and design.

Secondly, it is because on many occasions I actually think that technology that does not work is just as interesting as technology that does. This means that I have a high tolerance for error and like to repeatedly try in different ways to see if I can get something to function. I have never grown tired of a computer that does not do what I want it to, but look for other ways to solve the problem instead. I have patience with “wilful” computers and do not give up if they do not work the first one-hundred times. I try to find new ways through or around the difficulty. This is an attribute I have discovered among several of the experienced Internet users with disabilities that I have interviewed. Their Internet usage is not uncomplicated and they simply have to solve the problems that arise from time to time. But they do this because of the benefits that are waiting when a solution is found.

MY DISABILITY AND MY INTERNET EXPERIENCE

A disability is not an inherent characteristic of a person but something that is situated and contextual. A disability arises in specific situations and settings when an impairment results in a person’s inability to carry out a desired, specific action in a desired manner. “Impairment” and “disability” are both relative concepts, but they relate to different things and the one does not necessarily follow the progression of the other – not even to the extent that one increases when the other does. In my case, my impairment has increased over the last ten years, whereas my disabilities have decreased over the same period. Much if not most of my increase in function can be attributed to computers and Internet. I have worked, communicated, searched, participated, been there, played and learnt.

Originally, it was inconceivable for me to consider doing research on the disability problem complex that occupies such a great deal of my life. Gradually, I realized that it was actually my

own physical impairment and my own Internet experience that provide me with unique opportunities to formulate relevant hypotheses and see the connections that would otherwise require years of research to even begin to imagine. Undoubtedly, researchers without physical impairments and without Internet experience can contribute in these contexts, but if you are going to take the individual Internet user with a disability as your starting point, it makes a considerable difference to be a member of the group yourself.

The Papers

This thesis is based on the following papers, the complete versions of which are appended. The papers are referred to as Papers I, II, III, and IV throughout the text.

All four papers deal with function and design of functioning in different ways. Two papers (I & II) discuss empowerment through the importance of involving disabled users in the design process and how to go about doing so.

The other two (III & IV) discuss the direct consequences of technology usage: they deal with the empowerment afforded through the use of Internet.

PAPER I: MAKING BOTH ENDS MEET

The purpose of this article was to launch a new conceptual design tool, FACE, in rehabilitation engineering, technology and disability studies, useful both as guidance and help for disabled people in analysing their own functional aids, and as inspiration and meta-guidelines for designers. It is non-discriminating and classification free and differs from a mere classification system such as the *International Classification of Functioning* (ICF) (WHO, 2001). The origin of the tool is twofold: experiences of my own disability, and research in rehabilitation engineering and disability studies.

The resulting FACE tool combines three different factors that influence Functioning, Attitude, Control and Enabling. This makes it possible to analyse functional assistance in a new way, taking into account more factors than mere practical or mechanistic functioning.

The paper was originally published in *Disability Studies Quarterly* (special edition on technology and disability studies), Summer 2005, Volume 25, No. 3. It is published here with the kind permission of *Disability Studies Quarterly*, Society for Disability Studies, www.dsqsds.org.

PAPER II: ETHICS IN THE MAKING

The purpose of this article is to analyse how general ethical guidelines are challenged by situated ethics in a design context. This paper illustrates how values are present not only in what is done, but also in how it is done. Neither “the medical model” with its focus on individual impairments and interventions, nor “the social model” with its focus on social and ideological analysis can

alone provide firm ground for ethical considerations with respect to the experiences of the people affected by the design.

It is the whole chain of design and technology as well as the whole chain of societal resources that are relevant for how ethics are experienced: from the initial inspiration and design decision through the design process to actual usage where human everyday life is influenced by the design results. Ethical research perspectives are discussed in the context of international codes, charters and declarations of human rights as well as in the context of situated ethics and particular desiderata, with an emphasis on the latter.

The paper was originally published in *Design Philosophy Papers*, No. 4, 2005. It is published here with the kind permission of *Design Philosophy Papers*, www.desphilosophy.com.

PAPER III: BEING THERE

This paper examines the use of the Internet as experienced by people with significant mobility/physical impairments who are accomplished computer and internet users. The study is based on interviews and focuses on computer usage in everyday action and interaction.

The results show that in many cases, the new possibilities that the computer and Internet offer have meant not only important improvements in quality of life but first time occurrences of great personal significance.

The analysis is phenomenographic, resulting in main categories and subcategories, illustrated primarily through direct quotations. The three main categories are: independence, communication and learning.

The paper was originally published in *Disability & Society*, Vol. 20, No. 7, December 2005, pp. 719–733. It is published here with the kind permission of Taylor and Francis, <http://www.tandf.co.uk>.

PAPER IV:

PEER ASSISTANCE WITH PERSONAL ASSISTANCE

This paper describes and analyses a community of disabled people in Sweden that uses an online forum to discuss personal assistance issues. The forum is a community of practice (CoP) that has its roots in everyday living with personal assistance. The contributions to the forum were studied over a four-and-a-half year period including a total of 2,755 postings from 146 persons. The levels of the CoP's learning system were analysed using the **FACE** tool, which examines **F**unction based on **A**ttitude, **C**ontrol and **E**nabling. The results indicate that a learning system within a CoP that makes it possible for disabled people to complement,

confront and counterbalance the influences of existing learning systems, theories and methods of the professionals in the area.

The paper has been submitted for publication in *Disability & Society*, 2006.

Research persons, methods and procedures

The research that is presented here was conducted over a period of five years from 2001 to 2006. The mental process leading up to this actually started, though, around 1995 when I, as a “quite disabled” person, resumed the engineering studies that I had interrupted when I was still “quite able-bodied” but found studying too difficult due to my disabilities. Previous examples of my reflections and contributions on the potential of Internet for disabled people can be found in the following list of publications. All of them are available at <http://www.certec.lth.se/publicat.asp>.

Year	Author/s	Title	Type
1999	Anderberg, P.	Internet Learning for All	Licentiate thesis
1998	Anderberg, P. Falkvall, J. Jönsson, B.	Inside the Internet	Report
1998	Anderberg, P. Magnusson, C.	Learning from Learning	Article
1998	Anderberg, P. Jönsson, B.	To Make the Strange Familiar	Article
1997	Jönsson, B. Anderberg, P. Eftring, H. Falkvall, J.	IT, Disabilities, Research and the Process of Learning	Article
1996	Jönsson, B. Neveryd, H. Eftring, H. Anderberg, P.	Creating a University for Everyone	Article

Research persons

There are several disabled people who have directly contributed to my work during the five years of active research (see Table 1).

In the interview study, a total of 22 people were interviewed, 8 women and 14 men, ranging in age from 25 to 60. In the forum study, 146 persons have contributed with postings. There is also a background group of a large number of other people with mobility/physical disabilities that I have met internationally over the years, particularly on Tenerife and in Sweden. I have discussed with them possibilities and problems involving Internet and

technology. With a handful of them, I have discussed in-depth issues related to this thesis.

To this, as already mentioned, I can add myself as an ongoing, complementary group of one since I have been unable to avoid coming up with ideas in my daily life based on personal experiences or of personally recalling every new trend, hypothesis or connection that has arisen for the groups of research persons.

Number of research persons	Presented in	Type of study	Duration
22 persons	Being There, <i>Journal of Disability and Society</i> (Anderberg, 2005) Paper III	Phenomeno-graphic Interview study	Nov. 2002 to June 2003
7 persons	WWW. Welcoming. Wide. World. Certec Report (Anderberg, 2006b)	Case study, interviews	Nov. 2002 to June 2003
146 persons, participants in a web forum on personal assistance	Peer Assistance with Personal Assistance <i>Journal of Disability and Society</i> (Anderberg, 2006a) Paper IV	Analysis of a web forum	Oct. 2001 to March 2006

Table 1. Scope of the studies and the articles in which they are presented.

Methods and procedures

The processes and the results are described in the published articles and I do not intend to repeat that here. I would, however, like to comment on my own engineering background and its influence on the practical aspects of the research.

For the most part, I have utilized databases and my own written routines and programs to manage the large flow of data in order to find and retrieve specific information, be able to structure it and use it as mental support, and for testing different possibilities. To that can be added the disability perspective: Since my arm and neck functions do not allow for repeated movements or long shifts, one ambition has been to automate repetitive activities as much as possible and let the computer do that kind of work, thus minimizing the number of keystrokes in each task.

Study	Description of computer support
Interview studies	All the interviews were carried out in digital sound format directly on the computer to enable a simple and entirely computer-based processing of the transcriptions and text. Coded text units could be directly entered into the database using the voice recognition program, <i>Dragon Dictate Naturally Speaking</i> , in conjunction with a sound processing program the author developed for this purpose.
All texts	A program that checks references in the text against the reference list. It saves references with descriptions for quick search and retrieval. The program can be used to search for references from different authors on the Internet, download and enter them directly into the database. This means that one can avoid repeated and needless usage of regular books.
Forum studies	Self-developed programs that regularly check requested forum postings on the Internet, download and save the information in a structured manner directly in the database for further processing.
Data processing	A large variety of different and specialized programs to structure and support coding and structuring of text data.

Validity and reliability

The issues of reliability and validity are closely related to the concept of knowledge. Reliability traditionally refers to the consistency of results, i.e. if repeated measurements yield the same results. Reliability in this sense does not have a key role in this thesis because the everyday Internet conditions vary and change from day to day as do the research persons.

Validity, however, ought to be discussed. It generally answers the question of whether the studies presented in the papers actually investigate what they intended to. The concept of validity cannot stay the same from a modernist positivist stance in which the world is objectively measurable, to a post modernist stance in which truth is regarded as a social construction and knowledge a product of individual and collective negotiation. In qualitative research, validity is based on existing, extensive and open knowledge about the subject being investigated. According to Patton, “Qualitative inquiry depends, at every stage, on the skills, training, insights, and capabilities of the researcher, qualitative analysis ultimately depends on the analytical intellect and style of the analyst” (Patton, 2001, p. 433).

Kvale (1997) considers validity to be the quality of craftsmanship of the researcher. It cannot be reduced to a post research check of the results but is present in the entire research process. Validation is seen as continuously checking, questioning,

and theoretically interpreting the findings. In this process, the researcher uses in-depth knowledge about the question being investigated and his skills in the various phases of research.

Kvale mentions communicative validity in which testing the validity of knowledge involves a dialogue with the persons interviewed, the general public and the scientific community. It is a necessary factor in obtaining valid knowledge about the object being studied. "Communicative validity involves testing the validity of knowledge claims in a dialogue. Valid knowledge is constituted when knowledge claims are argued in a dialogue: What is a valid observation is decided through the argumentation of the participants in a discourse" (Kvale, *ibid.*, p. 244–245).

The third kind of validity presented by Kvale is pragmatic validity. This refers to practical testing of the knowledge claimed by the research and the researcher. The best test of validity would be if any portion of the communicated results are of any use to the interview persons, practitioners, the general public or the scientific community. Kvale quotes Patton in saying that, "The ultimate test of the credibility of an evaluation report is the response of decision makers and information users to that report" (Patton, 1980, p. 339).

Kvale sees communicative validity as including an aesthetic dimension, but pragmatic validity involves an ethical dimension. "A pragmatic concept of validity goes further than communication; it represents a stronger knowledge claim than a mere agreement through a dialogue. A pragmatic validation rests upon observations and interpretations, with a commitment to act upon the interpretations – 'Action speaks louder than words'" (Kvale, 1997, p. 248).

The ability to generalize in qualitative research is closely related to the question of validity. Kvale suggests three types of generalization: naturalistic, statistical and analytic.

Naturalistic generalization comes from the researcher himself; it is his personal experience of the phenomena contrasted to his previous knowledge about, and experience of, similar phenomena. These are the everyday generalizations people make about the world.

Statistical generalization is formal and explicit. It is based on the notions of random sampling of a general population and formalized parameters of the confidence of the outcome.

Analytic generalizations are made from an analysis of the similarities and differences of the situation examined and the one we are interested in predicting. It differs from naturalistic generalization because it specifies and demonstrates the supportive arguments where the researcher makes it possible for others to judge the claim of generality.

In this way, an analytic generalization becomes the shared responsibility of the researcher and the reader concerning what the researcher wants to communicate. The researcher's role is to prepare and guide the reader to the results, but it is up to the reader to complete the generalization.

"Thus the chief point to be remembered with this type of research is not so much whether another position with respect to the data could be adopted (this point is granted beforehand), but whether a reader, adopting the same viewpoint as articulated by the researcher, can also see what the researcher saw, whether or not he agrees with it. That is the key criterion for qualitative research" (Giorgi in Kvale 1997, p.189).

MYSELF AS A TOOL FOR RESEARCH

My knowledge of the area covered in this thesis stems from 20 years as a computer user, 15 years as a wheelchair and personal assistance user, more than 10 years as an Internet user and rehabilitation engineering professional, and at least 5 years of higher education in social model and independent living theories. Just by living my life, this blend of experience and knowledge gives me access to several crucial insights but is also cause for caution. There is always a risk of bias influencing the result. Since Internet and other technologies have had such a large positive impact in my life, I may be tempted to present them in a more positive light than they deserve. This could be interpreted as there being a political agenda behind my research. The expertise described above can be used to paint the picture I would like the onlooker to see, rather than the picture I actually saw. This could be deliberate, but there are other unpremeditated sources of error: I could simply be too close to the subject.

It is my strong belief that no research is without bias, and this may be particularly true for qualitative research, where the researcher himself is the instrument, the measuring tool. The first step in dealing with this is to be well aware of the problem and problematize it in every phase of the research. The second is to ensure openness in sources and to provide richness in the descriptions and in analysis.

In all four papers on which this thesis is based, I have tried to ensure that my reasoning is clearly stated and that the craftsmanship validity is possible to judge. It is, however, difficult to extensively elaborate on critical and important background issues and discussions that are central to a greater understanding. I have tried to include more of this material in this thesis instead. All the papers have been through the peer-review process with subsequent corrections and clarifications. This is a form of communicative validation.

In Paper I, the FACE tool for analysing the functioning of disabled people is introduced. It arose out of my situation and knowledge of how disabled people use technology. The primary empirical data is from my own situation, but the abductive process leading up to the formulation of this tool for analysing, assessing and developing functional assistance, involves a multitude of other sources; other peoples as well as experience and writing.

The nature of this research's validity is mainly pragmatic and to some extent communicative. It is through actual testing of the FACE tool that its usefulness and validity will be determined. If people in other situations can utilize it, it will prove to have general qualities. Another test of this nature is if it is possible to generalize to other types of impairments.

In Paper II, the analytical reasoning is found in the text. It is the paper per se that the referees considered valid for the context of the online journal of *Design Philosophy Papers*.

The two empirical studies presented in Papers III and IV aim to describe the Internet functioning of disabled people. Not much is mentioned in these reports about any problems for disabled people with Internet use and the positive outcomes reported are apparent. This can be seen as an incomplete picture of disabled peoples' Internet use, but the research purpose has been to investigate the Internet functioning and the situation for people who have already solved many of the problems of disabled peoples' Internet use reported in other research. This makes it possible to generalize in a different way, to see in depth what this technology can mean for a larger group of people, if the problems are solved.

The problem with giving an incomplete account of disabled peoples' Internet use can be addressed by acknowledging that this research is only a piece of the whole picture, one aspect or angle. Others, for instance Seymour (2005), have a different research focus and different research persons and elaborate how disabled people abandon and under utilize the Internet technology. Her focus is "the self-identity of the user and to the broad dimensions of global capitalism within which the user-technology relationship is negotiated in order to explore the factors that shape decisions to adopt or to abandon technologies."

Sheldon (2004) also gives a somewhat different picture of disabled peoples' Internet and technology use. Her research participants were largely unwaged people, many of them older. She focuses on the line between technological possibilities and the dangers, and the division between those who can benefit and those who cannot.

Sapey (2000) has examined employment data from the USA and UK on the process of informationalization, and found that disabled people are more likely to be excluded from employment

in the informational sector and that the current reforms of welfare may remove some of the safety net provisions that have been part of the hegemony of care established under industrialization.

The backgrounds and perspectives of the researchers differ, as well as their analyses of the study object. The object of study is constantly changing and the time lapsed between the studies can show a moving picture. Young people may have a different view than old. People who are positive towards technology and changes see things differently than people who are more hesitant. Children today live their lives in virtual worlds to a greater extent than children did only five years ago. When these children become adults, their childhood experiences will probably result in different research outcomes.

In any case, it is when many different aspects or pieces are put together that the full picture in all its complexity and changes can begin to emerge.

The interview study in Paper III was conducted with 22 persons with motor impairments who were experienced Internet users. This group enabled me to access information that would have been impossible to acquire from a random sampling of the population.

The limited length of Paper III was not enough to convey the richness of the answers of the persons interviewed. To ensure maximum exposure to this material, another report was presented, a case study with seven cases (Anderberg, 2006b).

In Paper IV, all the source material is available in uncorrupted form over the Internet in the forum studied. The interesting situation where all the material that the researcher has used is potentially available for the reader, makes the question of validation somewhat special. It is actually possible to check my analysis against the source material for anyone who is really interested. However, the ethical implications of this are not trivial. In Paper IV, I have described the measures I have taken to protect the people in the web forum from exploitation. This is my responsibility as a researcher. The possibility to check my results thus exists but is interwoven in a delicate fabric of ethical considerations, necessitating an ethical discussion before making this kind of validation possible.

Making all ends meet

Two approaches guide this research: 1) empowerment through technology, and 2) participation in and control over the design, implementation and use of technology as functional enhancement.

In this chapter, I present the theoretical background of my research and this thesis. First there is a description of relevant background in the field of rehabilitation engineering and design, focused on empowerment and user participation. This is primarily based on elaborated material from two reports: *Rehabilitation Engineering and Design Research – Theories and Methods* (Jönsson & Anderberg, 1999) and *Situated Research and Design for Everyday Life* (Jönsson & Anderberg et al., 2004).

This is followed by descriptions of basic concepts in the areas of disability studies and independent living.

Rehabilitation Engineering and Design

Rehabilitation engineering and design is a multidisciplinary subject concerning that which arises when a person and the disability she experiences in a potentially disabling setting encounters technology that is intended to minimize or eliminate the disability. Jönsson and Anderberg (1999) define rehabilitation engineering and design as follows:

The starting point for rehabilitation engineering and design research are human needs/wishes/dreams and its most important yardstick is the enjoyment and benefit it brings to users. The process thus begins with the individual and ends with the individual. At the same time, the method, and to some extent the language, of rehabilitation engineering research is that of technology – the technical solutions and their design demonstrate how problems have been interpreted and how technical and educational possibilities can be implemented.

In rehabilitation engineering and design, the person is central and technology is used as a means for achieving the functions that the user desires. The design process includes the time after the user has started utilizing the technology. This is crucial since the design process also involves a variety of factors that are not only technological in nature. Involving the user in the entire process and focusing on such factors as independence, integrity and personal power results in the whole design process being based on

the user's lived disability. There is a fundamental division between a person's impairment and the different factors in the surrounding environment that disable or cause a disability to arise.

The field of rehabilitation engineering and design has a lot in common with rehabilitation science and engineering as it was introduced in the 1997 IOM report, *Enabling America* (Brandt & Pope, 1997) and further developed in 1999 by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR Long Range Plan, 1999). Katherine Seelman, director of the NIDRR, described rehabilitation science and engineering as a new disability paradigm that is both "integrative and holistic" and focuses on the whole person functioning in an environmental context. The contextual aspects of disability are central along with the focus on function in rehabilitation science and engineering. Disability studies "assure that the perspective of the group under study is reflected in the methodology and body of core knowledge. It also maintains that individuals from the group have the opportunity to participate in the development and promulgation of the methodologies and the curricula" (Seelman, 2000).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES OF REHABILITATION ENGINEERING

The explicit objective of rehabilitation engineering research is that disabled people will benefit from the results, sooner or later. The results can consist of prototypes suitable for product development or for continuing use as they are. They can also be tools for acquiring relevant knowledge. The research results usually concern knowledge of needs, of how products should be designed, and of how the process for eliciting the needs and products should be designed. None of this can be achieved unless the researchers are there as situated actors, with design and technology as tools and with good opportunities for the people involved to provide feedback through their way of using or not using. Along the way in longitudinal projects a common memory may evolve which considerably strengthens the preconditions for interactivity.

The main objective for acquiring knowledge of the needs of a user could be to establish user requirements for developing a specific product into a commercialized one, but also to discover design principles for designing and developing other technological solutions as well. By developing prototypes in close co-operation with users up to a level where they can utilize the prototypes in real situations, it is possible to discover common patterns in user needs. These patterns may generate design principles as well as new hypotheses. Of course, different individuals often require different solutions, but with new knowledge it is in any case possible to ask more relevant questions in the design process.

In the very design process, artefacts may serve as probes to reveal new knowledge about and for the user. Technology can be considered a language: It affords a means with which to ask, to intervene, and to give feedback. Certain aspects may be better expressed through actions than through verbalization (Vygotsky, 1930). In the essay, *Technology is Society Made Durable*, Bruno Latour uses “actant” as a term comprising artefacts as well as humans. The separate actants are not as important as are the relationships between them (Latour, 1991). Artefacts transcend the will of people who might be far away in time and space. The artefacts and the technology as a whole make society sustainable, acting as implementations of agreements that originally were purely social. Since technology can only develop in dialogue with the culture and has to express values that are accepted there (Castells, 2000), it can be regarded as thoughts made visible and robust. The stability achieved through technology and artefacts is of special importance for people with disabilities. The actants should not be in charge but at hand, transcending the necessary involvement and help.

THE DESIGN PROCESS

The design of technical solutions represents in itself an interpretation of problems in a language of its own, different from the word-based analyses of observations, interviews, questionnaires, etc.

In rehabilitation engineering, technological measures influence the interaction between the person and her environment in such a way that she experiences increased function or functionality in that setting. *Function* is a product of all the lived effects of the introduced technology for the individual. Technology in and of itself is not rehabilitating but can only become so when it has such a function. This means that all technology is potentially rehabilitating, depending on the function it has for the individual who is using it. Research should continuously problematize who has power over what technology should be developed and why, as well as what problems need to be solved. It is thus important to pay attention to and describe the underlying social and cultural structures in which technology should be developed and used. A strong emphasis on participation in the entire research process is a necessity.

In rehabilitation engineering the person should not be seen as an object that can be studied, functionally measured and treated. Neither the user’s list of priorities nor the criteria for their fulfilment are accessible from the start. These are shaped through interplay with technology/ technological efforts (models, mock-ups, early prototypes), with designers and other people with similar disabilities. The critical moment in the design of assistive

technology is not about the choice between high and low tech, but rather between straight-forward solutions aiming to normalize (reduce the effects of the immediate shortcomings) and attempts aiming to grasp at least parts of a situation out of at least parts of its complexity. Jönsson and Anderberg express this as follows: “... it may be appropriate to question, at the very outset, whether the solution should imitate fully the solution for a non-disabled person (the parrot method), have the same purpose but a different form (the chameleon method), or be completely different and only retain its fundamental characteristics, its very core (the poodle method)” (Jönsson & Anderberg, 1999). The parrot method is most common because it is natural to build on an established pattern of thought, technology and *modus operandi*. But you always have to ensure that the technology solves the right problem, and be aware of how the technology interacts with both the physical and social environments.

The Parrot Method. If it is possible to imitate, like a parrot, the way a non-disabled person would handle a certain situation, this may be the best solution (at least from a social perspective). This means that the system, consisting of the person with a disability and her technology, is capable of doing exactly what she would otherwise have been able to do without her technology: She chooses exactly the same approach to problems that other people can handle without the aid of technology. Examples are: glasses, prostheses, corrective medication.

The parrot method can be successful, and sometimes this is where one must begin. But it is important to let the situation talk back and to follow up to ensure that one has solved the right problem. You can sometimes avoid running into a dead end by defining the function you are aiming for before you begin to solve the technical problem.

The Chameleon Method. The aim might be to perform the same task as the non-disabled person is able to do, even if it is not meaningful to imitate the way in which it is carried out. Instead, like a chameleon, one tries to change the “colour” of the solution by changing technologies to achieve the same result.

Examples of chameleon solutions for people with visual impairments would be using Braille, speech synthesis or audio books instead of ordinary text (the purpose is the same as it is for sighted people: being able to take in something that has been documented). Using wheelchairs and guide dogs are other examples (the purpose is the same as for sighted people: being able to move about independently).

The Poodle Method. Like Goethe's metaphor in Faust, this is about getting to the heart of the matter; about finding the innermost part of the dream, the wish, or the need. Even with technology, it may not always be possible to do what you want to do. And even though it may be possible, it might not be worth it to make the original dream come true at any cost. Perhaps the specific activity is not the most important – another activity that yields the same feeling might serve the same purpose.

An example: A young man used to enjoy sailing very much, but after a neuromuscular disease his muscles were too weak for sailing. He liked the challenge of the sea, feeling his body working and strong, feeling his powers. So to him an automatically operated sailboat controlled simply by pushing two or three buttons was meaningless. That was not what he experienced in sailing; it had nothing to do with his need and wishes. What was the driving force for the sailing activity? Was it the physical or the intellectual challenge? Is it possible to find an activity that can be physically experienced just as much or even more so? An activity that will make the body buzz with exhaustion and joy? Perhaps there is an altogether different activity that would provide the same intellectual challenge. These are the types of activities that should be supported by rehabilitation engineering, not the original ones which, in fact, can no longer be achieved.

Originally, the parrot, chameleon and poodle methods were side effects of a communication about methods in a narrow research community at Certec. Later, the metaphorical labels began to be used in wider communities, probably due to their pedagogical and communicative strength. The manual, *Go For It*, that was produced by the EU financed EUSTAT project, Enabling Users of Assistive Technology, is a good example. The main aim of the EUSTAT project was to develop training models and educational material for persons with disabilities and elderly people in order to empower them in making informed and effective choices of assistive technology. The manual has been translated into seven European languages. In this manual, the methods described above are seen as especially advantageous to consider before starting the process of acquiring assistive technology. To have this information can help empower a potential user to control the service delivery process and to stand up against the professional knowledge of the advisors (EUSTAT, 1999).

In one way, the parrot, chameleon and poodle methods resemble both the FACE tool introduced in this thesis (see the FACE section below) and the STEP model introduced by Arne Svensk (Svensk, 2001). But while the parrot, chameleon and poodles have to stay

on their metaphoric level as reminders before and after, A, C and E (Attitude, Control and Enabling) can be checked more concretely in the implementations as can Security, conText, Experience and Precision, the main concepts when designing for distributed cognition.

ENGAGING USERS IN THE DESIGN

One cornerstone of fruitful design is the necessity of involving users in the design process. This engagement requires not only users to become active in the process but also requires developers to become engaged themselves in gaining a better understanding of use contexts and situations (Kirschner et al., 2003; Plato & Jönsson, 2001).

There are many ways to involve users in a design process (Preece et al., 2002). The concept “user-centred design” emerged in the mid-1980s. According to Gould and Lewis the three main principles of user-centred design are: early focus on users and tasks, empirical measurement and iterative design (Gould & Lewis, 1985). Early focus on users and tasks incorporates various methods to examine characteristics of a user group through, for example, user mapping, task analysis, questionnaires or direct observation. These surveying methods are described in the EU accessibility project *Userfit* (Poulson et al., 1996) or standard human-computer interaction and human factors literature (e.g. Sanders & McCormick, 1992; Helander et al., 1997). Empirical measurement is the practice of letting future users use simulations and prototypes, and measuring their performance through quantitative feedback including measures of efficiency, number of errors, time to complete tasks, etc. Good descriptions of such test methods may be found in Jeffrey Rubin’s *Handbook of Usability Testing* (Rubin, 1994). Iterative design is a standard component in design methods (Gedenryd, 1998) and builds on a cycle of design, testing and measurements that is repeated as often as needed, starting with early prototypes. Usability engineering (Nielsen, 1993) builds on the user-centred approach, but attempts to make the process easier to fit into an engineering perspective by focusing on the usability goals as a measure of when the iterative design process may be stopped.

PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

Participatory Design (PD) has its roots in a Scandinavian tradition and had from the very beginning a political agenda. The researchers and designers who worked with trade unions in the 1960s had a clear aim to empower workers and involve them in the introduction and design of new technology (mostly regarding information and communication technology – ICT) in the

workplace. Ever since, it has kept a strong focus on the democratic and ethical perspectives of design, as well as the introduction and use of technology in the workplace, even though socio-economic conditions have gradually changed since the 1970s. (Ehn, 1993; Kensig & Blomberg, 1998; Beck 2002a; Bjerknes & Bratteteig, 1995).

Worker and user participation is, however, still a focus in PD, even though the view of the involvement of other organizational members, including management, has shifted with the spirit of time. Today, many people in the work organization “with various relations to the technology design effort are included in PD projects” (Kensig & Blomberg, 1998).

The main interest of PD is still firmly rooted in user involvement and empowerment. Howard (2004) finds the principal objective of Participatory Design to be the “empowerment of laypeople to participate deeply, and with some measure of authority, in the evolution of technological systems.”

Balka (1995) sees PD as having both “political and technical features”, political in that it raises questions about democracy, power and control in the workplace, and technical in that its epistemological stand is that the end product will be better if designers and end-users co-operate in the design process. Greenbaum (1993) proposes a similar division in describing three different perspectives of the need and usability of a PD approach: the political perspective, the pragmatic perspective (better with early end-user involvement) and the theoretical perspective(s): “Since systems developers and people at workplaces do not experience the same things, this limits how well they can understand each other’s experiences” (Greenbaum, *ibid.*). Thus prototyping and situated learning are required. For both users and designers it is necessary to be “a reflective practitioner” (Schön, 1983).

Kensig and Blomberg (1998) have identified three main issues that have dominated the discourse in the PD literature: “the politics of design”, “the nature of participation” and “methods, tools and techniques for carrying out design projects.”

The philosophical grounds for PD make its tools and techniques, with their emphasis on the situated and the organizational context, a useful point of departure for rehabilitation engineering and design research. Bringing about empowerment through the use of technology is just as important in this context.

An unawareness of the economic, social, political and cultural causes of the origin of disabilities in rehabilitation engineering development and research can, instead, result in the consolidation of disabling structures in society.

Disability Studies

Disability studies is an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary field that focuses on the social creation of disability and rejects medical approaches to explaining, interpreting and responding to disability. Like ethnic, women's, gay and lesbian studies, disability studies has developed from a position of engagement and activism rather than detachment (Barnes et al., 2002).

A social model understanding of disability and the disabling factors in society constitutes the ideological foundation of disability studies. The original social model of disability was formulated in the early 1980s by Mike Oliver following the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation's (UPIAS, 1975) definition and separation of any causality between impairment and disability.

The social model makes a sharp distinction between adapting the individual and adapting the surrounding structures in which the individual lives. This is accomplished by differentiating the *impairment* the individual has and the *disability* that different social and physical settings create for a person with such an impairment. Disability is defined as a socially constructed oppression.

This distinction between disability and impairment is central to the social model. As a theoretical point of departure, this distinction is essential because it moves the disability from being a problem or a characteristic that is exclusively individual to being a contextual characteristic of the surrounding social and physical environment. Categorizations of people based on medical or social diagnoses are rejected.

All disabled people experience disability as social restriction, whether those restrictions occur as a consequence of inaccessible built environments, questionable notions of intelligence and social competence, the inability of the general population to use sign language, the lack of reading material in braille or hostile public attitudes to people with non-visible disabilities (Oliver, 1990).

The social model of disability developed in the UK originally referred to a rather materialistic view of the causes of disability. In the US, a more social constructionist model was framed in line with many other civil rights movements. Today, many more models or paradigms with the social model as its origin are found in the academic research field of disability studies. The core message in most of them is, however, that societal structures should be changed to accommodate people with disabilities, not that the individuals should be changed to fit into a rigid environment and discriminating society. Disabilities are seen as a

demand for justice and equality and not a question of individual shortcomings. Disability is not a characteristic of the individual but rather the discriminating situated response to an inaccessible, inflexible and unadapted environment and society. This response is directed at a wide variety of people and excludes them because of their inability to conform to a societal concept of physical and intellectual normalcy. Disabling and discriminating attitudes are routinely produced and reproduced in social, political, and cultural practices in everyday life (Oliver, 1990; Barnes et al., 2002; Barnes & Mercer, 2003; Albrecht et al., 2001).

In the Nordic countries, a relative model of disability can be said to be a version of the social model of disabilities. Exactly who is considered to be or to become disabled in this context is a question of environment and context, and the boundaries are indistinct. People can be disabled in different settings for a variety of reasons, age being a common one. That people become disabled in different environments should not be seen as an anomaly but as an element that exists in every society, defined by how it is constructed. Disability can be seen as a phenomenon that arises primarily from society's treatment of people who function differently than the societal norm.

Criticism of the social model has come from within the disability community for not taking into account the physical body in its analysis of disabling factors. It has been depicted as too unbending in its concentration on structural societal factors and criticized for "disregarding the cultural and experiential aspects of disablism" (Barnes & Mercer, 2003).

Barnes and Mercer describe three main strands of this criticism. The first is that the social model fails to recognize the physical and emotional problems that are associated with some impairments and that are disabling factors regardless of societal response. The second is that specific impairment groups are marginalized by some social model writings. The third criticism is that there is a failure to recognize that the experience of both impairment and disability can be different for different groups of disabled people (*ibid.*).

Both individual and social factors influence everyday life for a person with an impairment, as it does for anybody else. For example, not being able to lift and hold your child the way you would like, to take on physical challenges, to conduct your sex life the way you want are not disabilities because of lack of assistive devices or because of an unadapted society, but are the direct effects of the individual's impairment. This, however, does not mean that other restricted desired actions are not due to the lack of assistive devices or an unadapted society.

Thomas (2002) makes a distinction between disability and what she calls “impairment effects.” They are, for example, that blind people are unable to drive a car safely with today’s technology. This becomes a disability only if driving a car is a condition for obtaining paid employment (Barnes & Mercer, 2003).

Gabel and Peters (2004) argue that the social model emerged in resistance to the medical model and that this makes it difficult to acknowledge any benefits of the latter within the social model. Gabel and Peters acknowledge the benefits for disabled people that have come from medications and technologies that improve function. They see, however, the danger in the misapplication of the medical model to the social contexts of disability. It becomes a problem when the professional use of medical knowledge expands beyond the cure of the effects of illness, and starts taking precedence over social factors in analysing disabilities.

Influential critics, such as Tom Shakespeare and Nicholas Watson (2001), have pointed out that “the strong social model” has become too strong and that it is a “modernist theory of disability – seeking to provide an overarching meta-analysis covering all dimensions of every disabled person’s experience.” They see disability as sitting at the intersection of biology and society, and that the original “strong” social model over-simplifies the complex concept of disability and reduces it to a singular identity.

Most of the criticism can be perceived as legitimate, even though the orthodox social model that is being argued against is hard to find to any large extent amongst researchers today. In fact, what we see are a number of “theories that incorporate aspects of the traditional or ‘strong social model’, yet provide ways of theorizing disability more suited to current contexts and more responsive to emerging world trends” (Gabel & Peters, 2004).

Thomas (2004), however, suggests that the (strong) social model used in this criticism is a “simplified” and “impoverished version” of the early UPIAS social relational understanding of disability. She claims that “what has been lost is an understanding that disability only comes into play when the restrictions of activity experienced by people with impairment are socially imposed, that is, when they are wholly social in origin. Such a social relational view means that it is entirely possible to acknowledge that impairments and chronic illness directly cause some restrictions of activity. The point is that such non-socially imposed restrictions of activity do not constitute ‘disability’”.

Even if it is not currently possible to talk about one well defined social model, there is definitely a social model perspective. It still holds the ground breaking separation of impairment and disability that has undoubtedly yielded many political benefits and

provided a theoretical starting point for research, activism and discussion. Even if this perspective needs to be improved, challenged and adapted to the changing conditions for disabled persons in a modern society, it still holds the key to having broken the strong and direct causal link between the body and the situation of disabled persons in society.

Independent Living

The independent living movement and the philosophy behind it are closely connected to the fundamental thoughts expressed in a social model perspective. They share the notion that disabilities are socially created rather than a consequence of a medical condition (Hasler, 2003). The welfare system can, through its organization, create the image of disabled people being dependent and a burden on their families and society, in need of professional interventions and assistive efforts. Independent living philosophy can be seen as a radical challenge to this conventional thinking on disability as it “combines both an ideological and practical solution to the everyday environmental and cultural problems encountered by disabled people and their families” (Barnes, 2003). Given the right tools, disabled people are the best organizers of the functional support they need in their lives.

Independent living is a philosophy, a way of looking at disability and society, and a worldwide movement of disabled people who work for self-determination, self-respect and equal opportunities (Ratzka, 2005).

A common definition of the independent living philosophy is the one stated by Frieden et al.: “Control over one’s life based on the choice of acceptable options that minimize reliance on others in making decisions and in performing everyday activities. This includes managing one’s affairs, participating in day-to-day life in the community, fulfilling a range of social roles, making decisions that lead to self-determination, and minimizing physical or psychological dependence on others” (Frieden et al., 1979).

The focus on the individual’s ability to control and make choices in his/her life together with the concept of peer-support are cornerstones in the independent living movement. This means a rejection of unnecessary professional involvement and control (Ratzka, 2003a) and that disabled people themselves are the experts when it comes to their lives. Hasler (2003) has made a compilation of definitions of independent living and found that they focus on a few key concepts, namely choice, control, freedom and equality.

Independence in this case does not refer to “doing everything by ourselves” or “living in isolation” (Ratzka, 2003c). This is an

“To boldly go – where everyone else has gone before!”

Martin McNaughton,
Dublin CIL

important distinction since with an increase in disability comes an increased need for help with various functions, which in some ways leads to a greater dependence on others, both individuals and society. Independence is the right to define this need and to have control over the functional assistance you need to level out the difference, as well as to demand political power to build and rebuild in a way that is more accommodating for all citizens (Oliver, 1996; Corbett, 1997; Ratzka, 2003b).

Political power through the organization of disabled people and attempts to influence public opinion in favour of civil rights for disabled people are goals for the independent living movement, as well as for the disability rights movement in general. Still the focus of independent living can seem to have an individualistic element, where the living conditions of the disabled individual are at the centre, “while the independent living movement is allied with the disability rights movement, it can be distinguished from the disability rights movement by its core concern with improving the everyday life of individuals with disabilities. The disability rights movement is focused on improving the quality of life of disabled people as a class” (Global Summit, 1999). In this respect, the independent living philosophy comes close to the basic thoughts of rehabilitation engineering and design.

Introducing Enability Studies

The context for rehabilitation measures should be the political, economical, cultural and social environment, since this influences both purposes and selections of relevant aids. But there is also a reverse dependency: the view of disabilities and disabled people is influenced by the rehabilitation measures that exist in a society. With this in mind, it is important that rehabilitation engineering and design allow the knowledge gained from disability studies to provide feedback to all forms of rehabilitation measures.

The focus on the individual, and the perceived focus on an individual fix, makes the relationship between rehabilitation engineering and (assistive) technology and disability studies, rather complicated. While some disabled people rely on individual technology to function in their daily lives (the wheelchair being a good and common example), it is common within disability studies to view technological solutions to disability with scepticism.

Technology is sometimes acknowledged for its potential to liberate disabled people, but even more so for its potential for oppression. This “double-edged nature” was described by Mike Oliver in his influential *Politics of Disablement* (1990), and it is still an issue when technology is discussed in disability studies. In an

article on disability, work and disability politics in the 21st century Barnes suggests that, “While new technology, deregulation and more flexible production techniques may prove enabling to some, to others they will almost certainly mean worsening social isolation, and new and enhanced forms of exclusion” (Barnes, 2000, p. 446).

Control over, and attitudes towards technology, play an important role. In a conversation with a disabled woman about the potential of the stair-climbing wheelchair (we are both wheelchair users) she stated that she would never use such “a contraption” because she did not trust advanced technology. Further discussion, however, revealed that she had flown over the Atlantic in an airplane, and travelled in her adapted car on the motorway regularly...

The disabling structures that create disabilities influence, to the same high degree, the entire system consisting of the individual’s personal technology and physical environment. Economically, culturally, politically and socially disabling structures influence, to the same high degree, the individual’s personal technology as well as the surrounding physical structures. Oppression and discrimination of disabled people manifest themselves, to the same high degree, in these physical systems, and the interaction between these and the social structures is fundamental.

The division that is made between impairment and disability in the social model is fundamental and extremely significant because it places the disability outside of the individual. In rehabilitation engineering and design you move closer to the individual and look at the system in the space between the individual’s personal technology and the surrounding physical environment. You concentrate more on the function than on the disability and proceed from an existing function to gain access to the lived disability. To accomplish this from the perspective of the individual does not mean that the context and the structures that cause the disability can be ignored. Social model perspectives are, to a great extent, a point of departure for rehabilitation engineering and design as well.

Rehabilitation engineering defines the disabling environment as including the entire material space the person lives and moves in. It is not possible to separate the individual, his personal technology and the surrounding physical setting when your goal is to improve a function. For example, a wheelchair and the physical setting in which it is to be used must be seen as one system. It is crucial not to view them as being isolated from one another.

Technology and design can be said to mediate both function and disability. The general view of impairment in society steers the formation of the individual’s personal technology as well as the

configuration of the surrounding physical environment. The reverse is also true. The formation of these systems influences the view of disability in society.

In Paper I, the example of the difference of the wheelchair space in a movie theatre being located in the aisle or in the middle of the row is given. Regardless of the technical or design solutions, whether the wheelchair space occupies the best or worst situation in a theatre sends out different attitude signals. These signals are received by all visitors to the movie theatre. The same goes for a lecture hall – if the podium is accessible with a wheelchair or not, if it is easily accessible with a permanent solution or if it is a provisional solution – all send messages about the attitude towards a lecturer in a wheelchair.

In his book, *Enabling Technology: Disabled people, work and new technology*, Roulstone (1998) uses the social barriers approach to understand the experiences of disabled people using new technology in the workplace. Roulstone uses a social model perspective to identify social barriers such as negative attitudes and perceptions about disabled people and disability against the background of new technology. This approach allows him to focus “on the broader configurations of factors that surround the experience of new technology, and in seeing the main benefit of technology in its impact on these barriers” (ibid., p.10). This is contrasted to a traditional rehabilitation approach using the individual or deficit model, seeing the introduction of new technology as “one that corrects an individual’s personal shortcomings” (ibid., p.11) without problematizing the physical and social environment in which it is introduced.

Roulstone sees that it is the disabling and restrictive features of the work environment that many times constitute the problem for disabled people in the labour market, rather than lack of skills or other personal features. Disabling and excluding attitudes limit the potential of new technologies, and it is necessary to address these attitudes along with the introduction of technology in the workplace.

Even so, Roulstone concludes that the introduction and use of technology gave a majority of the people in the study control over their work situation and the possibility to actually change the attitudes of their co-workers as well as the general public, through the enabling process that was a result of the introduced technology. “For some, this enabling process reversed a lifelong conditioning which suggested that as a disabled person they were definable in terms of what they could not do” (Ibid., p.125).

To the same extent that disability studies uses social model perspectives to describe and analyse how environments, structures and attitudes disable people with impairments, Roulstone shows

one can study how technology can enter these environments as function creating enablers. This can be seen as a supplement or sub-discipline to disability studies accordingly named “enabling studies” or “enability studies”.

The FACE tool

The FACE tool, developed as a conceptual design approach for the “disability ACE (Attitude, Control, Enabling)”, is an attempt to create a layer system where the different factors can coexist and be given appropriate explicatory value according to their different influences on the actual experienced functioning (Paper I).

The factors are derived from and have their base in my personal experiences as a personal assistant and assistive technology user, and my professional experiences in rehabilitation engineering and design. In Paper IV, the “disability ACE” is further defined, and the layers are described with respect to the theoretical paradigms used in this thesis: rehabilitation engineering and design, independent living and disability studies.

Attitude concerns how the function is perceived, framed and socially constructed by others and by oneself in the context where it is used, i.e. to what extent is the function free from or affected by disablist and discrimination attitudes? *Attitude* is connected to the *social model perspectives*.

Control focuses the extent to which the user, the owner of the function, has the power and right to define and execute the function (its choice, development, execution and economy). *Control* aspects are closely connected to the *independent living perspectives*. It is necessary to clarify that this control must include the right to decline and refuse any use of assistive technology or function solutions that for some reason does not fit the needs of the individual user.

Enabling validates how well the constructed implementation of the design, its technology, economy, flexibility, physiomy, etc., matches the individual’s wish to perform the desired actions. *Enabling* is the traditional approach in rehabilitation technology and design.

The FACE tool can be used as an abstract guideline, especially before and after a design process. To become concrete and continuously useworthy it must, however, be supplemented by examples and practical use. In the following chapters I will discuss technology and function assistance for disabled people in an argument for the need of a tool that can hold all these different

levels at the same time. In order to do this the FACE tool presumes a political, ideological and normative awareness and an awareness of the difference between what is disabling and non-disabling attitudes in society. If for instance the users have no concept of the different ways of having control over one's life situation, the tool becomes rather useless as an instrument for guidance. In such cases it can still work as an instigator and awareness creator of the mere fact that there actually are other levels that influence and affect functioning.

In Paper IV, I used the FACE tool to examine how a web community of disabled people discussing their personal assistance can serve as a learning platform. It was obvious that some attitude, control and enabling aspects were more important than others. When structured out of ACE, the practical examples helped deepen the understanding of what "better personal assistance" actually means, not at a generalized consensus level but on an individualized with elaborated possibilities to pinpoint your own aspects of choice.

In Paper II, the FACE perspective is applied through the focus on the situated ethics. Control and attitude decisions in an actual design situation have obvious ethical consequences.

In Papers III and IV, the FACE perspective shows that the Internet is an arena with high functioning for groups of disabled people on both the control and attitude levels. The individual is afforded high control over his Internet functions and can experience a desired independence. He/she can control, counter or avoid negative attitudes in the online setting. The question here can be on the enabling level, where economic factors and the lack of good user interfaces can disallow a number of disabled people access to the Internet.

I would like to give two short additional examples of how the different levels of FACE can be used:

The first example is to look at the Independent Living Institute's "Taxi for All" project. The background is that it is virtually impossible for disabled people in Sweden to use public transport outside of their own municipality. No forms of taxi services are available for Swedes (or visitors from abroad) who, for example, are visiting the capital of Sweden, Stockholm. Designated "taxi service for disabled people", so-called *färdtjänst*, in specially adapted buses is available on an advance approval basis in one's own municipality. This taxi service has to be ordered about a day in advance.

The purpose of the "Taxi for All" project was to create a more "normal" alternative for public transport and taxi services for disabled people, by suggesting that all taxis should be adapted for

use by disabled people as well. (For more information see the Swedish description in www.independentliving.org/taxi/index.html.)

FÄRDTJÄNST – DESIGNATED TAXI SERVICES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

(A) The discriminating attitude that is shown by society when an entire system with special solutions for disabled people is created instead of making public transportation accessible for all consolidates disablist attitudes. Only people who are approved for the service can travel. Disabled visitors can not use public transportation in Sweden.

(C) The individual has limited control over his/her travelling, since such travel can be grouped together with other disabled persons travelling. No time guarantee is given for departure or arrival and it is impossible to travel with friends or family since the service is designated for disabled people and assistants only. The necessity to order the taxi service a day in advance makes spontaneous or unplanned travelling impossible.

(E) It has a high degree of enabling, since it is performed in specially adapted vehicles, and you can travel from door to door.

TAXI FOR ALL (ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TAXI SERVICES)

(A) Disabled people are seen as full citizens with access to the same transportation system as all other.

(C) You can decide yourself when, where and with whom you want to travel.

(E) Depending on the adaptation of the taxis, the accessibility might be slightly lower for some disabled people than with “Designated taxi services for disabled people”.

This example shows one of the strengths of the FACE method for analysis of functions. If only the Enabling factor had been considered it could have been argued that “färdtjänst” had the same or higher functioning than taxi for all. But if attitude and control factors are weighed in, taxi for all can be shown to have a higher degree of functioning.

A NEW SPORTS ARENA

The second example is another authentic case: the construction of a new sports arena in Karlskrona, Sweden in 2005. The functioning for disabled people in this arena can be seen as high,

both on enabling and control levels. Door openers, elevators, big bathrooms, etc., make it possible to move around the arena independently with a wheelchair.

However, the available place for people in wheelchairs to sit is separated from the “normal” seats on a balcony with plexiglass, in the corner. This makes it impossible for a family, with both wheelchair users and walkers, to sit together, and the functioning on the attitude level is low. It would have been easy to design the gallery to allow wheelchairs next to seats and solve this problem, if only this aspect had been identified with a FACE analysis early in the design phase.

Technology, society and disabled people

The feeling of freedom and independence was enormous. With three wheels and a motor under me, I set off into the world again. First with my friend as a guide and for security, later on my own. Me and my machine. The machine that obeyed me. Just me. Up the hills and into buildings. Down the backstreets and over kerbs. Strong, quiet, obedient, without a fuss, without exhorting. No questions and no negotiations. A light push of the thumb on the throttle. An electric motor, two batteries, three wheels, a few steel rims and a few other odds and ends. I knew exactly how it worked technically. But I hadn't had a clue as to how it would work for me. ("*Might and Machines*", Anderberg, 2006a).

In this chapter I will discuss technology and disability and I will also try to give weight to the argument for looking at the man-technology-environment as one system, one unit of analysis. This is important both for a further understanding of the background to the FACE tool and for an understanding why the Internet has become such an outstanding technology for disabled people.

Attitudes, disabled people and technology

The following subsections discuss the question of attitudes and technology.

WHERE DOES THE PERSON END AND THE TECHNOLOGY BEGIN?

It is difficult, often meaningless to try to figure out where the person ends and the technology starts. You touch the ground and feel the pavement with your wheelchair and when you turn around, your wheelchair turns with you. You are part of a functional system consisting of your body, your wheelchair and the ground beneath you. The boundaries you have for experiencing the world go beyond the physical limitations of your skin and are determined by the system for experiencing the world in which you exist.

In his book, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (1972), the cybernetics pioneer Gregory Bateson illustrates this point with the example of a blind man with a walking stick.

Where do I start? Is my mental system bounded at the handle of the stick? Is it bounded by my skin? Does it start halfway up the stick? Does it start at the tip of the stick? But these are nonsense questions. The stick is a pathway along which transforms of difference are being transmitted. The way to delineate the system is to draw the limiting line in such a way that you do not cut any of these pathways in ways which leave things inexplicable (ibid., p. 459).

Bateson's view is that the information received through the cane is directly relayed to the person's mental system and processed as any other information received, for example, by the eye or the finger:

“There are lots of message pathways outside the skin, and these and the messages which they carry must be included as a part of the mental system whenever they are relevant” (ibid., p. 458).

The image of the prosthesis as an extension of the body, and an enhancement of the bodily functions evokes many connotations and thoughts. In her book, *The War of Desire and Technology at the Close of the Mechanical Age*, Allucquere Roseanne Stone (1995) describes her feelings after attending a lecture given by the physicist, Stephen Hawking. Stone starts off listening to Hawking outside the overcrowded auditorium through the Public Audio system (PA), but decides she wants to go in and see and listen to him in person.

Sitting, as he always does, in his wheelchair, utterly motionless, except for his fingers on the joystick of the laptop; and on the floor to one side of him is the PA system microphone, nuzzling into the Votrax’s tiny loudspeaker...Exactly where, I say to myself, is Hawking?...In an important sense, Hawking doesn’t stop being Hawking at the edge of his visible body. There is the obvious physical Hawking, vividly outlined by the way our social conditioning teaches us to see a person as a person. But a serious part of Hawking extends into the box in his lap. In mirror image, a serious part of that silicon and plastic assemblage in his lap extends into him as well...No box, no discourse...On the other hand, with the box his voice is auditory and simultaneously electric, in a radically different way from that of a person speaking into a microphone. Where does he stop? Where are his edges? (ibid., p. 4-5)

Stone sees the prosthesis in the shape of a speech synthesizer. Her fascination with how Hawking “extends” into a piece of technology and her thoughts on his vocal presence and displacement in time and space, could in one way be seen as typical for the time, at the beginning of the era of information technology. This “extension” of Hawking into the speech synthesizer is not fundamentally different from how people can be seen as extending into a computer or an email or a chat room, when using that kind of text based conversation. The limitations of the prosthesis of written communication, as well as the habit of answering email without too much time for reflection, are limiting factors that are taken for granted today. One could easily argue that it is the format of an IRL (In Real Life) lecture that creates a discrepancy between how the prosthesis in the form of an external speech synthesizer is experienced, relative to using the voice from one’s vocal cords (internal speech synthesizer). Sarah S. Jain puts it as follows:

Questions of human-prosthesis or human-machine interfaces are central to one's active agency in a community embedded in prefigured modes of technological praxis that always already privilege certain body configurations (Jain, 1999, p. 41).

It is easier for the person using the prosthesis. It is first and foremost about function, and the desire to perform and control this function. But secondly, the function is inscribed in a system of internal and external perceptions of this technology, and the integration of technology into the self is not unproblematic (Sobchack, 1995).

Hernwall uses the concept "cyborg" when considering a human being with his or her technology as a functional unit. He sees the cyborg as a "human who incorporates technology and its affordances into her own essence to the extent that the technology becomes a self-evident prosthesis" (Hernwall, 2001; translated from Swedish by the author). Hernwall views the cyborg concept as a chance to move beyond technology's limitations and focus on the individual's opportunities and terms in the utilization of technology. He argues, with support of Haraway (1991) and Landow (1992), not to separate the human from her technology and not to evaluate the individual based on norms of technology and its limitations, but to focus on the potential gain for the individual.

The concepts of cyborg and prosthesis as metaphors with unnecessary or undesirable connotations are not unproblematic when used to describe a person's usage of technology. For the modern person, different products and artefacts as functional aids have become so natural that they already represent an extension of the human. For disabled people where technology is often necessary to perform a function, it should also be seen as a natural element. Technology can be individual and accompany the person, such as a wheelchair, hearing aid or glasses. Or it can be built into the surroundings such as ramps, door openers, hearing loops, contrastive signage, etc.

This does not make the question of where the borders between man and technology are drawn uninteresting. But based on the expanded technological perspective applied in this thesis, the focus on the desired function means the person is central and that the technology used is problematized from the individual's wishes concerning the function.

This corresponds to hitting a nail – it is true that you hold the hammer, true that you hit with it, but it is the driving in of the nail that is in such focus that you hardly notice the hammer. Similarly, both the computer mouse and the cursor are subordinate – it is what is done and what is achieved that matters. The focus is on the

action (Dourish, 2001). That is why, in most cases, it is meaningless to measure physical functions without including the use of the available technical aids. This is an area in which the ICF (International Classification of Functioning) needs to be modified (World Health Organization, 2001).

According to Claiborn, there is a “multiplicity of possibilities that go beyond any separation of human and machine. A Paralympian shot-putter, in this view, is not an individual person helped by high-tensile carbon-fibre legs, or a hybrid defined by dual constituent parts, but an athlete capable of multiple boundary-shifting performances” (Claiborn, 2005).

The quality and height of a pole-vaulter’s jump is judged on what height he or she manages to clear with the pole, not without it. It is of little interest to find out how fast a race car driver is able to walk or run the length of the track because it is the system made up of the driver, the car and the support team that is the relevant unit to optimize.

THE INFLUENCE OF ARTEFACTS AND TECHNOLOGY ON DISABLED PEOPLE

In 1985, you could receive a mobile telephone as a disability aid in Sweden, but today it is an obvious functional aid for almost all people. What is considered to be assistive technology versus standard technology is determined by the culture, location and point in time.

Progress often lags behind. In an interview for *Time Magazine*, the Independent Living Institute Director, Adolf Ratzka, posed the rhetorical question about the situation in Stockholm: “I cannot go by ordinary bus,” he says. “Is that because I had polio 37 years ago, or because the transport authority doesn’t buy buses that will work for everybody?” (*Time Magazine*, 1998-1999). Technology for adapting buses has existed for quite a while, and the only reason why so few buses are adapted are political and financial.

Science and technology studies examine how commercial, political, cultural and social values and interests steer scientific and technological developments and vice versa. One subject in the field is *Actor-Network Theory (ANT)* (Akrich & Latour, 1992; Callon, 1986; Law, 1987). In *Actor-Network Theory* all actors, human or non-human, are considered equally important for the analysis and are referred to in the same vocabulary. An example: The mobility of a wheelchair-user is dependent on a large number of factors, among them, the design of the wheelchair, the funding to buy a suitable wheelchair, the user’s ability to manage and control the wheelchair, the organization and accessibility of the environment in which the wheelchair is used, etc. It is up to the person doing

the analysis to find the relevant factors for the action under analysis.

It may seem radical and somewhat ethically shaky to grant objects and artefacts the same explanatory status as human beings in an actor network. But for the *Actor Network Theory* analysis, the boarder between humans and machines is not the issue, and their equity in the analysis “does not mean that we have to treat the people in our lives as machines. We don’t have to deny them the rights, duties, or responsibilities that we usually accord to people. Indeed, we might use it to sharpen ethical questions about the special character of the human effect – as, for instance, in difficult cases such as life maintained by virtue of the technologies of intensive care (Law, 1992).

Ingunn Moser and John Law (1999) have used *ANT* to elaborate on disability and ability in a series of stories about Liv, a wheelchair and personal assistance user. They find that the “links between dis/ability and subjectivity are close – which means that any study of the materialities of dis/ability is incomplete unless it also attends to the continuities and discontinuities of subjectivity” (ibid.). Liv is inscribed in an enabling network, with technological aids and personal assistants, giving her a considerable amount of agency in some of the environment she exists in, less in others.

Moser and Law see Liv as a cyborg, “in the sense, that she is irreducible to a unity, even though ‘she’ is also a unity” (ibid.). They make a convincing argument in showing how dis/abilities are created in networks made up of heterogeneous, material, and specific entities as described from this particular *ANT* perspective.

Myriam Winance (2006) has studied how persons with neuromuscular problems test their wheelchairs. With an *Actor-Network Theory* as a starting point, and also leaning towards phenomenology, she analyses the network made up of the wheelchair user, wheelchair, technical personnel, etc. The negotiation of various compromises and improvements during the trial period gradually transforms the entities involved, including the person’s identity, and the relations between them.

ATTITUDES, TECHNO-FASCINATION AND TECHNO-FREAKS

There is an interesting techno-fascination in the detailed descriptions of how Liv controls her environment, making her not only a cyborg in the sense of a human in control of her human-technology unit, but also an incapable person, at the mercy of technology. What was intended as stories of enabling and control transfer, are partly transformed into pity stories with the cyborg as the incapable techno-freak.

This is a common way of portraying disabled people's use of technology in popular media (Claiborn, 2005). Jeffrey Deaver's novel hero, Lincoln Rhyme, is described as follows in the publisher's note:

Lincoln Rhyme dazzled readers with unparalleled forensic sleuthing – all done from the confines of a wheelchair. A famed criminologist, paralyzed from the neck down, Rhyme compensates for his physical disability with his brains – and the arms and legs of his brilliant and beautiful protégée, Amelia Sachs. It is Amelia who “walks the grid” for Rhyme, acting as his eyes and ears for the famously dangerous and difficult cases (Deaver, 1998).

In spite of the frequent use of disablist language and occasional perpetuating stereotypes which are not confronted, the character of Lincoln Rhyme is an interesting one. He is inscribed in a truly fantastic and enabling actor network. He has one personal assistant attending to all his personal needs; he has access to all the technology he needs to perform his work as a forensic wizard consultant for the NYPD (New York Police Department); and he has access to a personal assistant doing his work for him in the field, to whom he is wired through the modern technology of cell phones and radio. He is in many aspects a very interesting and modern novel hero, brilliant and highly capable despite his impairment. Deaver is obviously fascinated by enabling technology and his descriptions are both detailed and interesting. But many times Deaver finds himself describing in detail incapacities instead, for example, when he lets Rhyme fail to make an important telephone call because he is too nervous and his computer voice recognition program fails; as a result, two people die (Deaver, 1998, p. 284). In an interesting epilogue to this incident, Deaver counters the guilt ridden and self-pitying Lincoln Rhyme with another character, a woman airplane pilot. She makes the argument that modern human beings are in most cases putting their own and other's lives in the hands of the technology they use. And that technology sometimes fails in this network, and sometimes the human actor (ibid., p. 384).

ABOUT THE NEED TO DEFINE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

The US National Council on Disability has summarized the focus on the qualitative and quantitative difference in the use of technology as follows: “For Americans without disabilities, technology makes things *easier*. For Americans with disabilities, technology makes things *possible*” (Radabaugh, 1988).

Among all the definitions of assistive technology, I want to cite two. First, the US law text:

Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. (The US technology-related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988, Section 3.1. Public Law 100-407, August 9, 1988).

Second, the international standard, ISO 9999, which defines a technical aid for disabled persons as:

Any product, instrument, equipment or technical system used by a disabled person, especially produced or generally available, preventing, compensating, monitoring, relieving or neutralizing the impairment, disability or handicap (International Standardization Organization, 2002).

The only absolute reason to define assistive technology is the funding people with disability can receive to obtain assistive devices. If I drive my three-wheeled powered wheelchair scooter to work, is it an assistive technology device or is it a vehicle with which I go to work? When my personal assistant drives it home, because I have to go somewhere else with a car, is it still an assistive technology device? When my sons borrow the scooter to drive around the park outside the house because it is fun, does it cease to be an assistive device and become a toy?

I can not get off it and walk if I wanted to, but my personal assistants and my sons can. I, my scooter and the surrounding environment make up a functional system that is necessary for me to get to work. That is what makes it an assistive technology device for me. But if I try to go down to the beach, in the fine-grained sand, or go up two stairs, it ceases to assist me and to be assistive technology, because it does not provide any function in those settings. But does the actual wheelchair cease to be an assistive device at that moment?

Some of my assistants refuse to sit on my powered scooter when they need to take it home or anywhere else. Sitting in a wheelchair makes them feel uncomfortable, although not in a physical sense. Some of them would rather take on the complicated and risky task of walking next to it, trying to manoeuvre it from the side. One assistant who was driving it home said that he felt that everyone was staring at him, and he felt so uncomfortable that he had to stop and get off the scooter and walk around for a while so that everyone would see that he did not have an impairment. He felt that people's attitudes towards him changed considerably when he was driving the scooter. The actual device signals the disability. That is not inherent in the technology per se, however, but an aspect of the attitudes towards disabled

people is transferred to the technology associated with them. Applications of technology for disabled people are often developed to meet health criteria rather than social criteria (Seelman, 2001).

Control, disabled people and technology

In the following subsections the question of control and technology is discussed.

TECHNOLOGICAL OR HUMAN PERSONAL ASSISTANCE

Personal Assistance (PA) or Personal Assistance Services (PAS) mostly refer to human personal assistance, i.e. a human being who helps out with daily chores. Following the definition of the independent living theorist, Adolf Ratzka, the word “personal” refers to the user and that the assistance is customized to the user’s individual needs. “Personal” means that the control over the assistance situation is in the hands of the user. He/she decides what activities are to be delegated, to whom and when and how the tasks are to be carried out (Ratzka, 1997). This definition does not in any way imply that personal assistance is limited to human assistance; personal assistance in the form of technological solutions should also be included, stand alone or as a complement. Such is the case in Paper I, which is included in this thesis.

There is a growing consensus that the functional needs of disabled people must be looked upon as systems rather than isolated instances. The concept of support systems was introduced by Simi Litvak and Alexander Enders in their chapter, “Support Systems: The Interface Between Individuals and Environments” in the *Disability Studies Handbook*, as a framework to study how different services work together. Support systems refer to the integration and fluidity of various supports that are necessary to serve individual needs. “Support systems bring together a full range of elements necessary to enable human beings to function in the world community and to accomplish tasks. Individuals have limited control over the environment. However humans do have control of the tools and people that enable us to live our lives” (Litvak & Enders, 2001). Just as is the case with personal assistance, support systems are “intensely and intimately individual” (ibid.) and depending on the “individual’s conceptual framework of self, role and community” (ibid.).

Support systems for disabled people, according to Litvak and Enders, are made up of three necessary components: personal assistance services (referring here to human assistance), assistive technology, and adaptive strategies. All of these are necessary for a person’s functional ability but the reliance on any of them depends on the situation and thus the importance of either type constantly

changes. The independence afforded by a powered scooter may be the best solution for going shopping at the mall, but a light and simple manual wheelchair and a strong personal assistant may be the only way to get up the Great Wall of China, in the absence of a stair climbing wheelchair.

Litvak and Enders list seven factors influencing the choices or preferences for how the individual designs his/her support systems:

1. Cost of the support and the individual's ability to finance it.
2. Time required to use one support versus another.
3. Availability of the desired support in one's society and area.
4. The degree of privacy and confidentiality versus companionship that a particular support affords.
5. Maintenance and managing cost for the support.
6. Physical and mental ease of use.
7. Visibility, intrusiveness and degree of stigma attached to the support.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND POWER

Technology can be seen as a manifestation of economic, political, social and cultural concepts as well as individual wishes and ideas, and the question of power is embedded. The possibility of empowerment or risks of disempowerment is strongly dependent on the power relations in the system in which the technology is introduced. The perspectives of the users or the task of changing power structures "is not at the heart of technical research unless social science perspectives are integrated" (Östlund, 2005). Optimization from technological factors alone is seldom fruitful when it comes to *Assistive Technology*. Technology that is used to empower people can also be used for the construction of the image of the "disabled person".

Seelman (2001) argues that technological decision-making has been too much in the hands of professionals and experts and that disabled people are invited mostly in an advisory capacity with no real power over policy decisions. Goggin and Newell (2003) suggest that this deficiency can widen the gap between disabled and non-disabled persons, rather than diminishing it.

The problem is that accounts of the development of digital technologies, like those of the wheelchair and cochlear implant, overwhelming view such technological systems as being inherently good and evidence of society's progress. Rarely is a broader perspective on the creation of technology taken, acknowledging how it is shaped by the role of professional

groupings and specialized knowledges, or the politics of technological systems (ibid., p. 9).

The power relations affect the use of technology all the way down to the individual user. A friend of mine refuses to use a certain assistive device because it makes him look “stupid”. Another friend discards the use of a certain technology because he does not trust it, i.e. does not have sufficient control over it.

The question of under-use, abandonment and non-use of assistive technology is a well known and discussed problem (Wessels et al., 2004). In a number of studies, Scherer has examined the complex issue of under-use and abandonment (Scherer, 2002; 1996; 2000). Scherer pinpoints the meagre user involvement in the selection of assistive technology as the single most important reason for the devices not being used.

Ratzka (2003a) further elaborates how the users of assistive technology must be strengthened as consumers rather than be considered patients. To be in good health but in need of functional assistance has nothing to do with the medical system. Ratzka concludes that the placement of assistive technology within the health care system “places us in the midst of the medical model of disability where disabled people are seen as problem bearers, where professional training is valued higher than first-hand experience, where disabled people are relegated to passive objects of professional intervention” (Ratzka, ibid.). Ratzka suggests a model where direct payments are used for the provision of assistive technology and foresees that this could turn over control of functional assistance to people with disabilities, making them take an “active role in the provision of assistive technology” instead of being only “frustrated embittered patients” subject to unwanted and unnecessary medical attention.

A way to break loose from the sometimes unwanted influence of professionals can be to share solutions with each other. Internet has hugely enhanced the prospects for do-it-yourself devices, cf <http://www.atsolutions.org/>.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN – DESIGN FOR ALL

Assistive Technology has many connections to *Universal Design* (with its roots in the US) and *Design for All* (European), with its British branch *Inclusive Design*.

The concept of *Universal Design* was put forward by a group of professionals and researchers at the Centre for Universal Design at North Carolina State University. Seven principles of Universal Design are provided to guide the design of both products and environment (Connell et al., 1997). They are as follows:

1. Equitable Use. The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
2. Flexibility in Use. The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
3. Simple and Intuitive. Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
4. Perceptible Information. The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
5. Tolerance for Error. The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
6. Low Physical Effort. The design can be used efficiently and comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue.
7. Size and Space for Approach and Use. Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility.

The European Institute for Design and Disability (EIDD) defines *Design for All* in the Stockholm Declaration as follows:

Design for All aims to enable all people to have equal opportunities to participate in every aspect of society. To achieve this, the built environment, everyday objects, services, culture and information – in short, everything that is designed and made by people to be used by people – must be accessible, convenient for everyone in society to use and responsive to evolving human diversity (EIDD, 2004).

Both *Universal Design* and *Design for All* are “holistic approaches that enlist ergonomics to create goods, processes, and environments accessible to all” (Seelman, 2005).

DESIGN FOR ALL AND DESIGN FOR ME

Not to be hindered by unnecessarily built in obstacles in environments and artefacts is a key factor for disabled people being able to participate fully in society, and have control over their presence there. The principles behind *Design for All*, *Universal Design* and *Inclusive Design* are extremely important for disabled people (Imrie & Hall, 2001; Aslaksen et al., 1997) and they are fairly well accepted as a desired goal in design. But to put these into practice is not without problems. No standard disabled person, with standard wishes exists, but rather a multitude of individuals with different abilities, wishes and personal standards.

The concept of *Design for Me* is introduced here to balance, complement and further *Design for All*.

From the perspective of the designer, *Design for All* means accommodating for a great number of personal solutions. Where *Design for All* is the societal, market or designer perspective, *Design for Me* holds the user perspective. The user wants his/her functions to work as smoothly as possible and to be able to have control over them.

Design for Me is already the predominant design solution when it comes to personal assistance; tailor made to fit the needs of the individual and where full personal control is seen as a prerequisite for high quality of assistance. The same argument holds for technical assistance.

Design for All and *Design for Me* aim at the same problem complex, the desired functioning of the individual, and are complementary but differ on where the main technological solution is positioned. *Design for Me* can be associated with “stand-alone AT” or “orphan technology” (Seelman, 2005) but goes much further. *Design for Me* consequently implies, but is not synonym to, a high degree of adaptation with the individual. This does not imply that adaptation with the environment is unwanted or unnecessary, quite the opposite. It merely points to the fact that higher functioning control can be achieved in a system where assistance can be more personalized, and that assistive technology with high functioning power that follows the individual makes him/her more independent of the environmental changes.

Design for Me also implies a high level of participatory design efforts with a high degree of user involvement in the shaping of the whole support system of technological and personal assistance.

In almost all cases a good *Design for All* facilitates *Design for Me*. *Design for Me* can also help in dealing with the *Design for All* paradox: accommodating for all possible use by all people in a certain situation is impossible. All people do not require the same kind of solutions. Sometimes the desired solutions are directly incompatible.

An example: I once had to use a bathroom at a Centre of Independent Living I was visiting. The bathroom held a number of different advanced adaptations; these were not helpful but rather in the way for me, and made the bathroom virtually unusable.

This paradox is of course a well known, but a seldom problematized (at least to any depth) fact within *Design for All* and *Universal Design* writings.

In many cases technology that has been developed for disabled people has made its way into the majority of the population (taps operated by one hand, remote control, low-floor buses, etc.)

(ICTSB Project Team, 2000). In many cases it is true that what is good for disabled persons is also good for the majority without disabilities, but it is no universal truth. Even less of a universal truth is that what is good for some disabled people is good for others.

Arguments can be raised against relying on individual technological solutions, seemingly associated with the individual model of disability, where the disability is positioned as a defect of the individual. The improvement of functioning of the individual have often been portrayed as promoting a negative, disempowered image of disabled people, rather than seeing the problem as political, social and environmental.

Along with many other disability studies, Litvak and Enders (2001) support this view:

The more “friendliness” that can be built into the environment, the fewer specialized supports the person will need to carry along. While elevators are not likely to be installed on Everest, curb cuts on city streets and accessible buses reduce the “hostility” of the environment. Continuing to see the problem as being in the individual (the medical model), as opposed to seeing the environment or society as being disabling (the interactive or environmental model), leads to design priorities for building stair-climbing wheelchairs rather than building ramps and curb cuts.

This point of view is at first easy to argue along with. Curb cuts, ramps and accessible buses signals, no doubt, a welcoming attitude, and the lack of them can be perceived as hostility towards a person in a wheelchair. But it could also be argued that in relying on the multitude of necessary adaptations of the environment, both manmade and in nature, disabled people lose control over where and when they want to go. Instead, the sporadic and occasionally made adaptations in places decided by others determine where we are allowed to go. With individual solutions the control lies with the individual. It may be argued as well that a high degree of individual control can be a positive attitude shaping element in itself. The image of helplessness can be hard to maintain where an individual has control over the situation.

A wheelchair that can climb stairs and drive around in the countryside could prove to be a better solution than having to adapt all buildings and environments in the world; and a cell phone is a much better solution than installing stationary telephones on every street corner. The closer to the individual and the more mobile and adaptable, the better the solution often is, at least if the emphasis is on control.

Rather than seeing the difference between *Design for Me* and *Design for All* as a question of the individual vs. the environmental model of disability, it could (somewhat simplified) be seen as a question of weighing attitude vs. control aspects of functioning.

As Litvak and Enders (ibid.) suggest, research is needed on what kind of technology disabled people desire and expect, “e.g. should there be curb cuts or curb-climbing wheelchairs?”

The question of where the line is drawn between desired use of *Design for Me* and *Design for All* must be constantly negotiated and problematized in the situations where the assistance is needed. The FACE method is designed to investigate this type of questions.

One should not allow *Design for All* to make oneself blind to the possibilities of *Design for Me*. Situated solutions (for Me!) represent in themselves one of many possible ways of adapting environments. It is not fruitful to be too dogmatic. For instance, if I could not see the blackboard at a distance, I would not demand it to be brought to me and only me; I would put on my glasses like everyone else. It is the multiple, parallel ways to perform a function that allow for *Design for Me*, and a selection from a smorgasbord is better than a dish that contains all different flavours.

The Internet is often a wonderful example of *Design for Me*. Functions can be performed in a multitude of ways and controlled and adapted according to the wishes of the user. In Papers III and IV, many examples are given as to how disabled people have been able to create solutions to desired functions by using the multitude of functions afforded to them in the virtual environments.

Assistive Internet technology

With increasingly more societal functions being moved to the Internet, an online identity is becoming more “normal”. It promotes a wide variety of new opportunities, i.e. the possibilities of being a student (Amtmann & Johnson, 1998; Anderberg, 1999; Schenker & Scadden, 2002) or being a teacher (Lance, 2002; Coombs, 2000; Tobin, 2002) by using online education.

Furthermore, the ability to control your online identity by disclosing or not disclosing information about yourself, and choosing any online identity you wish, is a beneficial result of the bodiless online presence. This facilitates, increases and enhances social interaction and opens up new communication opportunities for disabled people. Bowker and Tuffin (2002) have analysed the effects of communication on online media for disabled people from the perspective of identity. They identified a “choice to disclose” repertoire that was organized around three key resources: relevance, anonymity and normality. In an online setting with

text-based communication, individuals can control how others perceive them, by disclosing or not disclosing information about themselves. In addition, an individual can choose any identity he/she wishes, thus “assimilating into ‘normal’ culture” and thereby positioning this identity within a subjectivity removed from impairment. This provides disabled people access to a social context they would not normally have, as well as “time-off” from the disabling perceptions of others.

In a similar study, Seymour and Lupton (2004) examined online communication for disabled people. They found social and communication benefits, but were concerned that these opportunities were not fully exploited by disabled people as a group. “In providing the technological means to participate, cyberspace must be used by disabled people to construct satisfactory avenues of fulfilment for themselves and effective new forms of political activity. Techno-sociality and virtual participation promise new avenues for personal fulfilment and political action, and point to new ways of being and having a body” (Seymour & Lupton, 2004).

In a study of disabled Internet users in China, Huang and Gou found that involvement in online activities could generate higher levels of social capital for the users (Huang & Guo, 2005).

The visual anonymity associated with online interaction offers disabled people the potential to participate in social interaction beyond the stigma of a disabled identity. This is evident in the qualified deception repertoire where participants deliberately construct themselves and situations in ways which have no reality beyond the online context, yet are entirely justified because they protect disabled people from stereotyped judgements (Bowker & Tuffin, 2003).

The opportunity for autonomous skill acquisition and presentation is one of the most powerful functions that computers and the Internet have to offer. Improvement of spatial functions and skills in children by using computerized games (Akhutina et al., 2003) and virtual reality environments (Wilson et al., 1997; 1998) are examples. Studies with disabled children have shown that certain skills learnt with and via the computer can result in a number of social gains, including play and communication with peers and parents. Just as important as the creation of a system where skill acquisition is possible, is the potential to present these skills and to be able to excel in certain areas (Lindenstrand & Brodin, 2004; Lindenstrand & Brodin, 2003).

The Internet is a comparatively fast and easy-to-use source of information for disabled people. The ease in publishing online lets disability information and culture flourish there on many different levels (Thoreau, 2006; Goggin & Newell, 2003). Especially

interesting is the possibility for disabled people to access and control information, e.g. peer-to-peer information and contrasting views of mainstream, non-disabled and professional information sources. Thoreau carried out a qualitative study of representations of disability by disabled people on *Ouch*, a BBC-owned web magazine produced largely by disabled people. Thoreau found that the discourse on the website produced quite a different picture than that offered by the mainstream traditional media. It offered a disability-centred, experience-based, active, and positive picture of disabled people, within which they were represented as the majority, while non-disabled people were seen as an “other” (Thoreau, 2006).

In a study of 200 Centres of Independent Living in the US, a great variety of information was found online that promotes “consumer management over services, peer exchange, disability resources in local communities, advocacy, employment, and current information” (Ritchie & Blanck, 2003).

The possibility of expanding the geographical area for finding interesting contacts among other disabled people is a function available in virtual environments. This improves knowledge transfer between disabled people and can provide positive role models and expanding career choices (Burgstahler & Doyle, 2005). Disabled people can find it difficult to find specialized information appropriate to them regarding health care. The Internet can be used to provide disabled women with this kind of specialized information about reproductive health, for example (Pendergrass et al., 2001).

The Internet is a “unique tool for people with disabilities and others to engage directly in advocacy and social change activities” (Blasiotti et al., 2001). Transfer of information over the Internet can counterbalance and complement the information that flows from the professional world to people with disabilities. An arena where peer-to-peer learning is made possible can have a number of positive consequences in efforts to create political and ideological awareness. In mainstream politics, Internet provides opportunities for being included and participating in democratic processes by using different tools of e-government (Stienstra & Troschuk, 2005).

The potential of computers and the Internet for disabled people is undisputed for the most part, even though present-day practice fails to fulfil this potential in a number of ways and for many. Critics have pointed out the dangers of building a new and inaccessible environment on the Internet. Goggin and Newell argue that the Internet holds great opportunities for disabled people, but is in danger of becoming a new arena for the social creation of disability. Developments ignore disabled people and

assume non-disabled patterns, thereby creating a system where disability increases rather than decreases (Goggin & Newell, 2003).

The term “digital divide” has been coined to point out the differences in Internet access that stem from social, economic and educational barriers in a discriminating society. The grim reality is that disabled people, to a great extent, are on the have-not side of the digital divide. Stephen Kaye found that those who are disabled have considerably less access to both computers and Internet connections than non-disabled individuals (Kaye, 2000).

A Chinese study found a large reduction of social barriers for disabled people in that country who were Internet users, with a significantly improved frequency and quality of social interaction. But these are a minority and unrepresentative of the vast majority of disabled people in China. Disabled people with access are privileged and generally have a high level of education, relatively high levels of socio-economic support, and access to computer equipment and Internet services (Guo et al., 2005).

Criticism of the use of the term digital divide for being too “mechanistic-binary” in the sense that one is either “info-rich” or “info-poor” based on the mere availability of technology, has been put forward by Chaudry and Shipp. They have examined the barriers to information access faced by visually disabled people and propose a new paradigm, “information inequity”, that would consider the economic, political, cultural and educational as well as the technological aspects of marginalization (Chaudry & Shipp, 2005). All these aspects are intertwined in one another and are hard to separate. However, the actual user interface adaptations and the accessibility of online material are on a special level. People with different impairments experience different problems; without proper technological adaptations, portions of the online arena remain inaccessible for many, even when an Internet connection is available. Disabled users of the Internet who have sensory impairments or learning difficulties may find themselves excluded from online information sources due to an inaccessible web format. Still, these shortcomings must be analysed, keeping in mind that old information technologies, such as the printed press, “created enormous quantities of inaccessible information” (Coombs, 2000) for people who are blind or have low vision.

You can either be optimistic about the possibilities of technology and the market economy to solve these problems (Tusler, 2005) or take on a more negative approach to these mechanisms (Seymour, 2005). Either way, Internet developments must be closely watched and principles of universal design enforced at the earliest possible stages of IT research and development. Incorporating accessibility from the beginning is the only workable strategy (Seelman, 2000).

The question of development of new technologies or services can be seen as an invasion of the private lives of the users. This is interesting from an ethical point of view (Rauhala, 2003). Technology that supports independent living and/or health care in the home can easily be used for surveillance and control. The question of who is in control over the ICT that is used and developed must always be problematized.

Conclusions

"I put all my things in a pile in the middle of the floor. That way I know where they are."

"But Mu, you have so many things," said Mamma Mu, "That's certainly a big pile, isn't it?"

"You're right about that," said Crow, "Big, bigger and biggest. And bigger than biggest. That's how big it is."

"Oh, no," said Mamma Mu. "Is it that big? But how will you be able to find what's at the bottom?"

"No problem! I put everything on top."
(from *Mamma Mu Cleans*, by Jujja & Tomas Wieslander, 1997)

The Handbook of Disability Studies is impressive in its content and size. If it is on the table in front of me, I can browse through it, but I can not manage to put it back; nor am I able to take it out when I need it. It is the same for most books now, particularly if they are at the bottom of a pile. And it is not just books; most of what I need seems to be at the bottom of a pile or out of reach for some other reason.

That is not the case with my computer and Internet, though. Everything there is in a great big pile too, but it is all on top. I quickly find the books or articles I need and just as quickly can find the sections I am looking for. I read everything I am able to on the computer without a problem. Unfortunately, the selection of older texts is still meagre. I do not understand people who say they have to have a hard copy of a book in order to read it, or have to use an old typewriter with a ribbon or a goose quill in order to write. Books are beautiful on the shelf, but quite useless for me. But if it best suits someone else to read a traditional book, I think that they should be able to do so. The greater the number of solutions for the function of reading, the better it is for even more people. Digital books, talking books, hard cover, paperbacks; all make the contents of the book accessible for as many people as possible. Above all, it makes the text accessible for me, in the way *I* want it and in the combinations that suit *me* best on any given occasion. It can be designed for me.

Disabled people will always live in a predominantly "able-bodied" world, where the practices related to living with a disability are rarely visible. The Internet provides opportunities for increasing contacts and building personal networks, as well as increased visibility for the disabled individual, both inwards (to our own group) and outwards (to people who do not normally meet disabled people). Peer support and role modelling can more easily become available to a larger number of people. Possibilities of independence, learning and communication are afforded the disabled persons who make their way to the online environments. Still a tendency to view the online environments and contacts as a second best solution, or an impoverished substitute to physical environments and "real" human contact, can be found in many texts. This is not, however, a very fruitful standpoint. Apart from the obvious fact that far from all people find the online setting second best to the physical under all circumstances anyway, it is

also possible to do a simple current state analysis. There is actually an enormous number of inaccessible buildings and environments, discriminating attitudes and structures in the world, and there is no way that they will go away in any near future, regardless of the policies today. Even with the most progressive politics, fully enlightened by a social model understanding, disabled people will continue to be discriminated against in the coming years. The Internet actually exists here and now, it is what we have and what can give us relief here and today. The functioning described and analysed in this thesis shows that the opportunities afforded by computers and the Internet have resulted in not only improvements, but also in first time occurrences of great personal magnitude, where functions previously unavailable or impossible became readily available.

Needless to say, the possibilities to network and learn online must also be used for increased political and ideological strength, a strength that can be used in the physical world as well. This is because the different systems are complementary, in that everyone should be allowed to have their mixture of online and physical environments according to their personal wishes. And it should always be kept in mind that for some people, the physical contact possibilities are so limited that it is really not an option; the development of a virtual arena is the only one possible. It is important that it is allowed to develop and grow as an arena of its own, and not constantly be compared to the more “real” physical contact space. The improvement of Internet and other technologies, as well as our understanding of how people can control and interact with the technological systems they occupy and use is extremely important for the possibilities of disabled people to improve our lives.

I find it difficult to accept that the field of disability studies often seeks to leave out the whole area of rehabilitation and assistive technology and place disability studies “as a socio-political-cultural examination of disability”, distanced from “the interventionist approaches that characterize the traditional study of disability” (Linton, 1998). If instead, studies of the use of technology by, and its consequences for, disabled people were at the heart of disability studies, it would have at least two key consequences:

- 1) Some of the modern rehabilitation engineering research of today tries to approach disability studies, with a more holistic view on disabled people. But the theory building and analysis in rehabilitation engineering and design could no doubt benefit from a greater interest in its epistemology from theorists within disability studies. Who decides what a wheelchair should look like, and why are

there so few models and types? Who has the power to decide what research should be performed in rehabilitation engineering? How is disabled peoples' self image affected by the technological systems one uses and dwells in every day, and how can this be changed? These are some of the questions where rehabilitation engineering research could benefit from the insights and analyses from disability studies.

- 2) Disability studies could broaden its area of implementation. The successful lean-backward analysis of functional barriers and shortcomings of society and technology is not sufficient for guiding the implementation of empowering and enabling technology. There is a need for a lean forward-analysis, as well, which utilizes the possibilities of technology both as probes and solutions. The outcome of such situated, user oriented "enabling", or "enability studies" is by no means foreseeable but could yield insights into the needs, wishes and dreams of users on a level more concrete than other methods.

This research is a small step in highlighting and extracting key aspects of the relevant features at the intersection of disability studies and rehabilitation engineering and design. FACE can be considered an early representative of future tools for analysis of assistive technology in its widest context, tools which emanate from both technology and sociology.

The functions and environments described in this thesis are not exclusive to disabled people and they have few distinctive or identifiably unique solutions. In the virtual world, the functional impairment is left unremediated, and the functionally creative effect that arises is a consequence of the technology's ability to enable full participation in a variety of arenas without the usual limitations of the body. Accordingly, this is where the rehabilitation disciplines' individual functional enhancement and the social model's requirement for change in the environment come together – it becomes an arena accessible for all.

Populärvetenskaplig sammanfattning på svenska

Denna avhandling baserar sig på de erfarenheter av Internet som ett antal människor med betydande kroppsliga funktionsnedsättningar gjort. Personerna i studierna är erfarna och duktiga dator- och Internetanvändare och har få eller inga funktionshinder i dator och online världen, men däremot stora funktionshinder i den fysiska världen. Deras *functioning*, förmåga att fungera, på Internet analyseras i denna avhandling med hjälp av faktorerna *attitude* (attityd), *control* (kontroll) och *enabling* (möjliggörande) för att utröna vad som är möjligt när alla nybörjarproblem och alla dåligt anpassade gränssnitt redan är avklarade. Om den virtuella världen är fullt tillgänglig men den fysiska inte är det – vilka blir då effekterna på självbild, lärande, lärande gemenskaper, känsla för sammanhang, makt och kontroll? Vilka är effekterna av *peer-to-peer* lärande och samarbete? *Independent living*, dess begrepp och teorier, går som en röd tråd genom avhandlingen. Mest uppenbart är detta kanske genom valet av studier och perspektiv. Den teoretiska bakgrunden och de begrepp som används kommer från *disability studies* utifrån ett *social model* och *independent living* perspektiv samt från rehabiliteringsteknik och design. Just möjligheterna till samspel och ömsesidig utveckling mellan rehabiliteringsteknik och design å ena sidan och å den andra *disability studies* är ett centralt tema. Olika aspekter på design och teknik för funktion behandlas med hjälp av FACE-verktyget (Functioning- Attitude, Control, Enabling) ur ett utökat funktionsperspektiv, både individuellt och socialt.

SYFTE

Med sin grund i rörelsehindrade personers handlingar och beskrivningar av sitt Internetanvändande är syftet med denna avhandling att identifiera, beskriva och analysera de funktionsmöjligheter som Internet erbjuder.

Dessutom är målet att illustrera, diskutera och ge förslag på utveckling av den potential till samspel och ömsesidig utveckling som finns mellan rehabiliteringsteknik och design på ena sidan och *disability studies* på den andra.

BAKGRUND

Sedan ca 30 år tillbaka har jag gradvis fått en ökande funktionsnedsättning pga en muskelsjukdom. De senaste femton åren har jag använt rullstol, både elektrisk och manuell. Jag har personlig assistans en stor del av dygnet för att få hjälp med praktiska göromål i den fysiska miljön. Jag utexaminerades som civilingenjör 1997 och avlade teknologie licentiatexamen år 1999.

ANDREAS, LINUS & JAG

Andreas är sju år och Linus är fem. De älskar att leka kurragömma med mig. Det brukar börja med att de springer iväg långt bort och jag väntar en stund innan jag följer efter. De brukar ta vägen ner mot bäcken, över bron och bort mot vattenfallet, så jag vet ungefär var jag skall leta. När de har gömt sig brukar de hålla ett öga på mig så de vet var jag tar vägen. På senare tid har de lärt sig att ta vägen uppför kullen och bort mot den långa muren, den som liknar kinesiska muren, och som går hela vägen nerifrån dalen och upp mot bergen. Där är de svårare att hitta, men de brukar alltid låta mig få ana var de finns så att det inte tar mig för lång tid att komma på rätt spår. När jag börjar närma mig brukar de alltid smita iväg och jag får jaga efter dem igen till deras stora förnöjelse. De tycker också att det är roligt när vi far fram över ängarna och in i skogen.

När jag nästan fått fatt på någon av dem så brukar de ta ett skutt och hoppa rakt upp i luften. Sedan de lärde sig att flyga så har de insett att det är ett bra sätt att utnyttja ytterligare en dimension för att komma undan. Det är en härlig känsla med farten när vi far fram ganska lågt över kinesiska muren. Jag älskar att flyga fram där med Andreas och Linus i knäet, hålla om dem och gosa lite med dem när de är upptagna av att störta ner för den kinesiska muren i full fart.

Ibland tar jag med dem ner till stan och så tittar vi på alla konstiga saker och hus som finns där. De frågar om allt på barns vis och jag förklarar så gott jag kan alla de konstiga saker vi stöter på. Ibland fotvandrar vi omkring i Yellowstone eller i snövärlden, eller springer runt bland ruinerna i det gamla Grekland. Vi har faktiskt varit på Mars några gånger också och tittat på rymd-skeppen.

Andreas och Linus brukar alltså sitta i mitt knä i rullstolen när vi utforskar och leker i Active Worlds alla olika världar. Jag har min dator på skrivbordet rakt framför mig och Andreas har den datorn som står på bänken till vänster, Linus har den till höger. Vi sitter tillsammans i den fysiska världen och leker med varandra i den virtuella. Det är bara jag och mina barn, min fru är inte med, inga personliga assistenter, ingen annan utan bara en pappa och hans barn som springer runt och busar.

Jag umgås ganska mycket med mina barn, vi ritar, bygger lego, läser böcker och en massa annat. Men i många lekar och aktiviteter får jag ta rollen av relativt passiv åskådare. Att jag kan leka med mina barn på det sätt som jag beskrivit ovan, beror på att jag sedan lång tid tillbaka använder mig av datorn, internet och de virtuella miljöerna för att kompensera och eliminera de funktionshinder som uppstår i olika situationer.

REHABILITERINGSTEKNIK OCH DESIGN

Rehabiliteringsteknik och design är ett tvärvetenskapligt ämne som omfattar det som uppkommer då en människa och de funktionshinder hon upplever i en eventuellt funktionshindrande miljö möter teknik som är ägnad åt att minska eller eliminera detta funktionshinder.

Rehabiliteringsteknik och design har människan i centrum och använder tekniken som ett medel för att uppnå de funktioner som användaren av tekniken önskar. Designprocessen omfattar även tiden efter att användaren börjat använda tekniken. Detta är centralt eftersom designprocessen då kommer att omfatta en mängd faktorer som inte är bara tekniska till sin natur. Att involvera användaren i hela processen samt att fokusera på faktorer som oberoende, integritet och egenmakt gör att hela designprocessen måste vara grundad i användarens levda funktionshinder. Det krävs ett medvetande om den grundläggande skillnaden mellan en människas funktionsnedsättning å ena sidan och de olika faktorer i den omgivande miljön som i sig kan ge funktionshinder eller förhindra att de uppstår.

DISABILITY STUDIES

Den ideologiska grundstenen i Disability Studies utgörs av *the social model*. Den ursprungliga *social model of disability* blev formulerad på tidigt 80-tal av Mike Oliver, med utgångspunkt i *the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS)* (1975) och dess definition och separation av funktionsnedsättning och funktionshinder (*impairment and disability*). *The social model* gör en skarp skillnad mellan att anpassa individen och att anpassa de omgivande strukturer i vilken individen vistas. Detta görs genom att man skiljer på den funktionsnedsättning som finns hos individen (*impairment*) och det funktionshinder (*disability*, *disablement*) som olika sociala och fysiska miljöer skapar för en människa med en sådan funktionsnedsättning.

Detta flyttar funktionshindret från att vara ett problem eller en egenskap hos den enskilde till att vara en kontextuell egenskap hos miljön. Funktionshinder definieras som ett socialt konstruerat förtryck.

INDEPENDENT LIVING

Independent living rörelsen och filosofin bakom den är starkt knuten till de grundläggande tankarna som uttrycks genom *the social model* perspektivet. Funktionshinder ses som socialt konstruerade snarare än som en konsekvens av ett medicinskt tillstånd.

Välfärdssystemet kan genom sin organisation skapa bilden av funktionshindrade människor som en börda för sin familj och

samhället och att professionell hjälp och assistans är överordnad egna preferenser och upplevelser.

Independent living filosofin är en radikal utmaning av detta tänkande, då man ser funktionshindrade människor själva som de verkliga experterna och de bästa organisatörerna av den funktions assistans man behöver i sina liv. De grundläggande begreppen inom independent living kan sägas vara valmöjligheter, kontroll, frihet och jämlikhet.

ARTIKLARNÄ

Denna avhandling är en sammanlÄggningsavhandling och har fyra artiklar som bärande element. Här nedan presenteras artiklarna i korta sammandrag.

ARTIKEL I: MAKING BOTH ENDS MEET

Syftet med denna artikel är att föra fram ett nytt begreppsmässigt designverktyg, FACE, användbart både som vägledning och hjälp för funktionshindrade människor att analysera sin egen funktions assistans, samt som inspiration och begreppsmässiga riktlinjer för designers och forskare inom rehabiliteringsteknik och disability studies. FACE är icke-diskriminerande och fritt från klassifikationer av människor och skiljer sig på så sätt från ett klassificerande system som WHO:s *Klassifikation av funktions-tillstånd, funktionshinder och hälsa* (ICF), (WHO, 2001).

Ursprunget till FACE är tvåfaldigt: mina egna erfarenheter av funktionshinder och assistans samt min forskning inom rehabiliteringsteknik och design och disability studies.

FACE verktyget kombinerar tre olika faktorer som påverkar den upplevda funktionen: *attitude* (attityd), *control* (kontroll) och *enabling* (möjliggörande). Detta gör det möjligt att analysera och beskriva funktions assistans på ett nytt sätt genom att fler parametrar än de medicinska, tekniska, ekonomiska och samhälleliga tillskrivs ett förklaringsvärde. Artikeln publicerades ursprungligen i *Disability Studies Quarterly* (special edition on technology and disability studies), Summer 2005, Volume 25, No. 3.

ARTIKEL II: ETHICS IN THE MAKING

Syftet med denna artikel är att analysera hur generella etiska riktlinjer utmanas av en situerad etik i ett designsammanhang. Denna artikel illustrerar hur värderingar är närvarande inte bara i vad som görs utan även i hur det görs. Vare sig "the medical model" med sin inriktning på individuella funktionsnedsättningar och insatser eller "the social model" med sin inriktning på ideologisk och politisk analys ger i sig tillräckligt fast mark för etiska ställningstaganden med hänsyn till den berördas upplevelser. Det är i stället hela kedjan av design och teknik

respektive hela kedjan av samhällsresurser i sitt använda sammanhang som är det relevanta för det upplevt etiska: från den inledande inspirationen och designbesluten, genom hela designprocessen till det faktiska användandet där mänskligt vardagsliv påverkas av resultaten. Etiska forskningsperspektiv diskuteras både utifrån internationella koder och deklarationer om mänskliga rättigheter och utifrån situerad etik i sammanhang med särskilda önskemål och behov.

Artikeln publicerades ursprungligen i *Design Philosophy Papers*, no 4, 2005.

ARTIKEL III: BEING THERE

Syftet med denna artikel är att utforska Internet användandet så som det upplevdes av människor med betydande rörelsehinder som även är erfarna och kompetenta dator- och Internet-användare. Studien baserar sig på intervjuer och fokuserar på datoranvändning i vardagslivet, både professionellt och på fritiden.

Resultaten visar att i många fall ger de nya möjligheter som datorn och Internet erbjuder inte bara viktiga förbättringar av livskvalitén utan leder också till helt nya funktioner med viktiga personliga konsekvenser som följd.

Analysen är fenomenografisk och har resulterat i kategorier och subkategorier, som illustreras av citat från intervjuerna. De tre huvudsakliga kategorierna är: *independence* (oberoende), *communication* (kommunikation) och *learning* (lärande).

Artikeln publicerades ursprungligen i *Disability & Society*, Vol. 20, No. 7, December 2005, pp. 719–733.

ARTIKEL IV:

PEER ASSISTANCE WITH PERSONAL ASSISTANCE

Syftet med denna artikel är att beskriva och analysera ett online forum som används av en grupp funktionshindrade människor för att diskutera personlig assistans. Forumet är en *community of practice* (CoP) med sin grund i praktiken att leva med personlig assistans. En *community of practice* är en social gemenskap i vilken praktik, identitet, lärande och meningsskapande kan integreras. Inläggen i forumet studerades under en period av fyra och ett halvt år och bestod av 2755 inlägg från 146 personer. De olika nivåerna av lärandesystemet i CoP analyserades med hjälp av FACE verktyget (se ovan).

Resultaten indikerar att det lärandesystem som uppstår i gemenskapen gör det möjligt för funktionshindrade människor att komplettera, konfrontera och bilda motvikt mot det professionella lärandet på området, dess system, teorier och metoder.

Denna artikel har inlämnats för publicering i *Disability & Society*.

"– Jag la alla mina saker i en hög mitt på golvet. Då vet jag var jag har dom.
– Men mu, du har så mycket saker, sa Mamma Mu. Det blev väl en väldigt stor hög?
– Jajamensan, sa Kråkan. Stor, större och störst. Och större än störst. Så stor blev den.
– Oj då, sa Mamma Mu. Blev den så stor? Men hur ska du kunna hitta det som är underst?
– Jag la allting överst."
(Mamma Mu städar, Jujja & Tomas Wieslander, 1997)

SLUTSATSER

The Handbook of Disability Studies är en imponerande bok både till innehåll och till yttre form. Om den ligger framför mig så kan jag bläddra i den, men jag orkar inte lyfta undan den och kan inte heller ta fram den när jag behöver den. Så är det för övrigt med de flesta böcker numera, speciellt om de har hamnat i den nedre delen av en hög. Inte bara böcker förresten, det mesta jag behöver tycks ligga underst i en hög eller på något annat ställe utom räckhåll.

Fast inte i min dator och inte på internet. Där ligger allt i en stor hög och allt ligger överst. Jag hittar snabbt de böcker eller artiklar jag behöver och jag hittar snabbt de stycken jag söker i böckerna. Jag läser allt jag kan på datorn utan problem, tyvärr är fortfarande utbudet av framförallt äldre texter ganska magert. Jag har ingen större förståelse för människor som säger att de måste ha en pappersbok att hålla i för att kunna läsa och en gammal skrivmaskin med färgband eller gåspenna för att kunna skriva olika texter. Böcker är vackra i bokhyllan men oanvändbara för mig. Men om det av olika anledningar passar någon annan att läsa en pappersbok, så tycker jag att de skall få göra det. Ju fler olika lösningar på funktionen att läsa en text som finns, desto bättre för desto fler. Digitala böcker, talböcker, textböcker, ja, ju fler kanaler och format, desto tillgängligare för fler personer.

Om *Disability studies* i större utsträckning intresserade sig för funktionshindrade människors teknik och teknikanvändning skulle deras kunskap befrukta rehabiliteringsteknik och design – och vice versa. Internet är här ett specialfall av stort intresse eftersom det ger ökade möjligheter till kontakter och personliga nätverk och samtidigt synlighet, både inom intressegemenskapen och ut mot samhället i övrigt. *Peer support* och möjligheten att själv vara förebild och hitta andra ökar. Så gör också oberoende, lärande och kommunikation. Därför bör inte *online* miljöer och kontakter ses som en andrahands lösning, en lite sämre lösning än den fysiska världens och den 'riktiga' mänskliga kontakt som finns där. I själva verket är tillgängligheten och möjligheterna på Internet överlägsna vad otillgängliga byggnader och trafiksystem och rigida sociala strukturer erbjuder. Dessa avarter kommer inte att kunna byggas bort inom en rimlig tid även om politiken skulle ändras och bli mer progressiv på detta område. Internet däremot är redan ett existerande alternativ för många funktioner och kan dessutom användas som utmaning gentemot den fysiska miljön.

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THIS THESIS IS BASED ON the Internet experiences of people with significant mobility/physical impairments who are proficient and experienced computer users in their computer world but have limitations in mobility that severely restrict their functioning in the physical world. The Internet functioning of this group is analysed by means of the factors attitude, control and enabling, with the main focus on what is achievable when all access problems such as unadapted interfaces, beginners' difficulties and the digital divide are overcome. If the virtual world is fully available but the real world is not – what are the effects on learning, self image, communities of practice, sense of coherence, power and control? What are the effects on peer-to-peer learning and co-operation? Independent living concepts and theories manifest themselves throughout the thesis, most obviously, perhaps, in the selection of issues that are studied and in the perspectives.

The theoretical background and concepts are those of disability studies, with a social model and independent living perspective, but with strong influences from rehabilitation engineering and design.

Throughout the thesis elaborations and clarifications of the possibilities of interplay and co-existence between rehabilitation engineering and design and disability studies are made. Different aspects of function design and technology are examined from an expanded view on functioning, where technology is put in an individual and social context with the FACE (Function – Attitude, Control, Enabling) tool.

Knowledge Foundation ><

This research was financed by The Knowledge Foundation (KK-stiftelsen)

DOCTORIAL THESIS CERTEC, LTH NUMBER 1:2006

URN: ISBN 10 91-628-6936-1

ISBN 13 978-91-628-6936-6

AUGUST 2006

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FACE

Disabled People, Technology and Internet